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Puzzling participants or disaffected
citizenry? Re-examining education's
impacts on the electoral mobilisation of
Britain's youth

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Abstract

This thesis extends our understanding of a ‘puzzle of participation’ (Brody 1978). Across established Western democracies, turnout in elections has been steadily falling - at the same time, society is modernising. Central to this latter phenomenon is educational expansion, a process in which there is increased higher education (HE) enrolment, rising attainment levels, and even wider citizenship education. Under classic civic education hypotheses, such factors are anticipated to increase political literacy, raise electoral interest, and provide encouraging environments for political participation. Hence, the patterns we observe in turnout present as paradoxical. This is especially evident among the very youngest electors, who comprise arguably the most educated generation yet but are also the least likely to vote. The thesis thus poses the question: *Why is the comparatively higher level of education enjoyed by young people today not associated with a higher level of voter turnout?*

My response takes inspiration from Norris’s ‘critical citizens’ (1999, 2011) and combines this with repertoire replacement (Dalton 2008; Norris 2003) and sorting model (Nie et al 1996) theories to develop an argument based on a multiplicity of education effects on turnout. Specifically, I present a thesis which contends that higher levels of education today encourage the emergence of a *non-voting disaffected citizenry*, characterised by two distinct dimensions. The first, a *dissatisfied-disaffection* is thought to be present among growing student populations. It is this demographic group which, in response to its members’ HE experiences, is challenging established political processes, becoming more demanding of an active role in politics, and turning to alternative participation activities when opportunities arise. Within this I posit two non-voter types: (a) *frustrated electors*, committed to voting yet exasperated by the responsiveness of political actors and their policy offers at elections, and (b) *engaged activists*, pointedly rejecting voting in favour of more direct and ongoing influencing activities. The second dimension reflects *alienated-disaffection*. Here, individuals who lack HE experience are seeing their status and position decline in line with educational inflation, and, as a consequence, experience limited political network mobilisation, find their confidence for participation falling, and so withdraw from politics altogether. They are *marginalised*

citizens. Meanwhile, a number of young people will continue to vote, receiving encouragement from their social networks and partisan attachments; *mobilised voters*.

This thesis makes its contributions in testing and refining these propositions in the case of the British electorate using data from the British Election Study, British Participation Survey, and the Citizens in Transition Survey. Through a range of statistical techniques (including logistic regression, latent class analysis, and structural equation modelling) I devise new ways of operationalising disaffection, and assess its varied impact on turnout. This thesis progresses to explore typologies of participation repertoires, within which combinations of disaffection attitudes and turnout behaviours exist. It then examines in more detail the educational mechanisms through which these occur.

Lay summary

Whether people vote or not - and why - are key questions for political researchers. Education has frequently been found to separate voters from non-voters; people who stay in school longer or who go to university are almost always more likely to vote than those who do not. However, while in many Western countries more people are now staying in education after their compulsory schooling, the percentage of people voting in elections is falling. There is a puzzle: if people are more educated than before, why are they not voting? Why are young people, who are enjoying more educational opportunities than their parents, still less likely to vote?

In the traditional understanding, education helps individuals to understand politics better, which increases their interest in participating in elections. It also brings them into contact with politically engaged individuals who offer encouragement and support. However, my research tests a view that education can also promote an anti-voting view of politics. For example, if you can follow politics, you might also be more likely to question the ways in which it operates. If you decide it is not meeting your expectations, you feel dissatisfied, and so choose not to vote. At the same time, there are young people who still do not go to university, and where the general expansion of education can see them 'left behind'. You need more education than you did in the past to get a 'good job', and similarly you will likely need more education than in the past to feel listened to and represented in politics. Here, on the outside of an increasingly highly educated world, you can become even more hostile and so, again, not vote. A more educated youth population will not always mean a more politically participative youth population.

I use survey data from the British public and a range of statistical techniques to consider: (a) how education can influence people's attitudes to politics (and how they think about their participation in it), and (b) how these attitudes go on to affect their turnout. I find there are two important stages in young people deciding whether to vote. Firstly, they must develop an interest in voting itself. This usually happens through friends and family, with young people at university experiencing more encouragement than non-students, which can reduce the impact of any political hostility. Importantly, hostility can remain; so, secondly, when young people cannot find a party to support which might otherwise relieve this, they may still decide to stay at home on polling day.

These findings make an important contribution to discussions of youth participation in politics. They highlight that more education on its own, in its current format, will not always increase the likelihood that a young person will vote. They show that hostility towards politics is often at the heart of young people's decisions not to vote, but that this may be overcome if they can be encouraged by their friends to vote - and when political parties successfully attract their support.

Declaration

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The thesis is based on my own work, with acknowledgement of additional sources. It has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Charlotte Snelling

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Introduction

'Politics in democratic societies needs more than effective leaders and activists and a silent and patient citizenry. It also requires citizen engagement, without which the spirit of democracy that created support for the idea of democratic governance in the first place will be lost.' (Stoker 2006: 149)

'Political participation is at the heart of democratic government and civil society, and without it there can be no effective democracy.' (Whiteley 2012: 34)

Democracy can exist in various forms, be it direct, representative, deliberative, or participatory and there will almost always be disagreement in what are considered 'true' democratic practices (Sartori 1962: 5). As the above statements suggest, however, a key facet setting it apart from its rivals is its emphasis, in all its forms, on ensuring at least some level of citizen involvement in politics. Depending on the type of democracy being practiced the level, frequency, and type of participation will vary, yet in modern conceptions it almost always includes opportunities for citizens to vote in elections. This is true even in the most elite-led visions of democracy which promote only minimal public engagement (Sartori 1962; Schumpeter 1954). It is through elections that legislative representatives are typically chosen and the direction of policy shaped; 'their outcomes can change the contours of politics' (Parry et al 1992: 3). Voting therefore plays a prominent role in upholding democracy. Crucially, however, throughout many established democracies during the post-war period there are ongoing observations of decline in electoral participation (Franklin 2004). Research by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, analysing data from 214 countries and territories worldwide, 1945 to 2006, finds up until the late-1980s average turnout rested within the mid-to-higher 70 per cent range. During the period 1990 to 2006 this had fallen to just 70 per cent. In 2006 itself, the figure was only 67 per cent (2006: 10-11).¹ Such trends led Wattenberg in the title of his 2002 book on American democracy to ask, '[w]here have all the voters gone?' (2002). In 2004, Bromley, Curtice and Seyd similarly asked '[i]s Britain facing a crisis of democracy?', citing low electoral turnout as the 'most obvious' evidence for answering in the affirmative (2004: 9).

¹ Calculated as proportion of registered electors.

These patterns are of interest to many scholars of political behaviour who seek to analyse the determinants of voting choices and the reasons why variations occur within electorates and across them, both over time and cross-nationally. Moreover, they are generating concerns for a wider audience of politicians and policy makers, participation practitioners, and pro-democracy supporters who remain committed to maximising turnout. There are practical implications if turnout falls. Powell claims a key function of elections is to hold past governments to account (2000: 47-68) yet where turnout is low, fewer citizens exercise this right. While a government is still to some extent accountable – always knowing it may be voted out at future elections and still subject to non-electoral checks and balances – the legitimacy of elected representatives becomes more easily challenged. They can lack a popular mandate even in the most proportional systems. Inequality in participation is a further risk where we see the systematic withdrawal of particular groups. It is often peripheral voters with lower socio-economic status, already under-participative, who withdraw when turnout falls (Burden 2009: 546). An associated danger is that politics becomes the preserve of only the most participative groups, typically comprising socially and economically advantaged constituencies. Policies can come to favour these electors disproportionately and at the expense of others (Lijphart 1997). Research by the Institute for Public Policy Research in the UK, for example, illustrates that under austerity measures spending cuts of 20 per cent have been faced by those electors who did not vote in 2010 compared to cuts of just 12 per cent for those who did (Birch et al 2013: 2). In America, non-registered citizens have been found to be more progressive than registered electors, suggesting unequal turnout here generates a more Right-leaning politics (McElwee 2015). Fears are emerging that if current trends continue, the functioning of representative democracy – and ideals underpinning it – will be increasingly undermined.

These issues are particularly pertinent in the study of young people's political participation. Across Europe, young people are the least likely to vote. Only 59 per cent of 18-24 year olds in the EU15 voted during the 2000s compared to a population average of 80 per cent (Sloam 2013: 843-6; see also Fieldhouse et al 2007). In the UK, abstaining is now the norm for young people with approximately only 43 per cent turning out in the 2015 general election versus the 66 per cent average and 78 per cent of over 65 year olds (Ipsos-MORI 2015). Voting is arguably now the 'deviant' behaviour. A growing gap between young and old is also emerging in many of these cases (Sloam 2014b; Phelps 2004; Blais and Rubenson 2013; Fieldhouse et al 2007) which can exacerbate issues of

unequal political voice. Tensions can arise if, as a result, young people believe themselves to be overlooked or unfairly treated by those in power (Berry 2014a; Dalton 2006; Goerres 2008). Commentators in the UK have, for example, gone as far as to discuss young people as a group under attack by anti-youth government policies (Toynbee 2015). A cycle of under-participation may occur where youth abstention begets (perceptions of) less youth representation begets more youth abstention and so on. The habitual nature of voting behaviour (Plutzer 2002; Gerber et al 2003) suggests that if these behaviours are not altered during formative political years, young people's abstention will become entrenched. Generational replacement would see turnout decline and turnout inequality growing into even more extreme trends. Hence, within discussions of voting behaviour ever an increasing emphasis is being placed on the very youngest electors.

I. A puzzle of (youth) participation

It is in this area of persistently low and falling youth turnout that my thesis makes its contribution. Specifically, it takes a seemingly paradoxical phenomenon being witnessed across many of the Western electorates – the puzzle of participation (Brody 1978) – as its starting point. The puzzle emerges from attempts to situate participation trends within the context of the changing nature and demography of industrialised nations which are stemming from societal modernisation. The problem for scholars is that falling electoral participation appears heavily at odds with social progress. The case of educational expansion presents a particularly confusing case. On a range of measures many of these societies are more educated than ever before; the average number of years spent in education has grown, the levels of qualifications typically attained by populations are now higher, and there is increasing access to varied sources of information and teaching, including that which is political (Franklin 2004). The rise has been especially rapid in more recent decades. Between 1900 and 1940, Schofer and Meyer assess that worldwide there were fewer than 20 university students per 10,000 capita. This figure has since been growing consistently to as much as approximately 100 and 165 per 10,000 capita in 1990 and 2000, respectively (2005: 899). Young people are part of the most educated generation yet and, within this, have on average 'better' education levels than their counterparts in older age groups (Blais and Loewen 2011: 4).

These trends pose a puzzle when, at a micro-level, education is credited with encouraging a more politically active individual (Verba et al 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Hillygus 2005; Berinsky and Lenz 2011; Mayer 2011; Burden 2009; Galston 2001; Dee 2004; Gallego 2009, 2010; Straughn and Andriot 2011; Tenn 2007). In a classic sense it transfers the relevant skills and knowledge needed for participation, builds interest and awareness, and positions individuals within networks where they will encounter greater political mobilisation. If we adopt the language of rational choice, their receiving more education should reduce the costs of voting and increase the (perceived) potential benefits. From a sociological perspective, there is also the transferral of pro-voting social norms since it is within more educated constituencies that individuals tend to be already more electorally participative. When analysed at the individual level, the studies listed above and others consistently observe this positive association (see meta-analysis study by Smets and van Ham 2013: 348); a higher level education frequently appears to generate a more likely voter. Burden goes on to describe its presentation in the literature as 'a robust predictor if not the most important determinant of voter turnout' (2009: 541). With innovations in civics and citizenship education worldwide (Schulz et al 2010), young people today should be especially well-equipped and motivated to participate.

Evidently, however, as society has modernised and become more educated there has been a simultaneous trend of falling voter turnout. Our micro-level expectations are not matched by macro-level observations. When witnessing these seemingly contradictory patterns in America as early as the late Seventies, Brody coined his phrase 'the puzzle of participation' (1978). Drawing on traditional views about education as an agent of politicisation and supporter of electoral participation, he claimed there was a paradoxical relationship between increasingly educated electorates and their apparent withdrawal from politics. In his own words, it 'confounds our expectations and is at odds with the explanations of turnout offered by available theories of political behaviour' (Brody 1978: 290).

With young people being the most educated and yet least participative, I believe this puzzle is of particular interest among a youth demographic. Accordingly, my research seeks to investigate in more detail the relationship between young people's educational experiences and their individual voter turnout within this context of educational expansion. The central question it answers is:

1. *Why is the comparatively higher level of education enjoyed by young people today not associated with a higher level of voter turnout?*

I argue that the best way to approach this seemingly aggregate question is to work on understanding the relationship(s) between education and turnout at the individual level. This enables critical assessment of traditional education-participation assumptions and allows me to posit the potential multiplicity of alternative education effects influencing an individual's approach to political participation and turnout decisions. Doing so establishes how we should think about education as a determinant of voting behaviour which can then inform our interpretation of societal trends. Brody claimed available individual-level theories were insufficient, and that only aggregate over-time analysis could solve this puzzle. It is my contention throughout this thesis, however, that by expanding upon available theories of political behaviour and rethinking education's effects – as I intend here – individual-level approaches can make a significant contribution to answering this question.

II. Examining the puzzle: introducing the disaffected citizenry

As I will demonstrate, questions remain over the nature and extent of the puzzle. To what extent is declining and low turnout true of all young people? What does this suggest about the mechanisms through which education impacts upon their participation choices? While certainly the contrasting trends appear puzzling on first appearances, could it also be that a different interpretation of education effects renders these turnout patterns as reasonable and unsurprising? Might, in some circumstances, a high level of education encourage abstention? To what extent is 'the puzzle' really a puzzle? Equally, how accurate is it referring to it as one 'of participation' and not just 'of turnout'? These broad questions present the initial inquiries in which the following theoretical and empirical explorations are framed.

I adopt an approach which compares young people with the wider electorate but which also looks to identify (and explain) variation within the youth electorate itself. From this, there are three main areas in which possible explanations are forwarded – that declining and consistently lower youth turnout reflects: (1) forces encouraging an ever growing constituency of young people *with higher education (HE) experience* to abstain; (2) forces

encouraging an ever diminishing group of young people *without HE experience* to abstain and at rates which are overwhelming the anticipated positive education effects associated with the HE youth, or; (3) forces encouraging abstention among all young people, related to their being young, all entering the electorate in today's particular political context, and often having similar compulsory schooling experiences.

A literature review suggests potential in all three scenarios, seen particularly for the first two in repertoire replacement theories (Norris 2003; Inglehart 1990; Dalton 2008a) and a relative education sorting model (Nie et al 1996; Campbell 2009; Persson 2011, 2013; Tenn 2005). As I explain in Chapter 2, the former could correspond to students and graduates where their degree-level education and location on university campuses support a preference for more alternative participation activities which are pursued at voting's expense. The alternative activities are more direct, issue-specific, and non-party political – attractive to more educated and demanding individuals – while the student experience can increase access and opportunities for engagement in these. The sorting model would relate to young people without HE experience and a view that as education expands, these individuals are 'left behind'. Excluded from key mobilising networks, perceiving themselves as less well represented, and questioning their relative political ability, they can abandon politics altogether. Studies centred on age effects would then suggest that to compound both these phenomena, all young people face a turnout disadvantage connected to their limited electoral experience and greater start-up costs (Kimberlee 2002; Phelps 2012; Dermody et al 2010). Furthermore, the compulsory education they have experienced, prior to HE/non-HE distinctions emerging, is thought to have increasingly reflected an emancipatory pedagogical turn encouraging the exercise of agency and pursuit of self-actualisation (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Shor 1992; Carr 1995; Maslow 1943). Combined with the influence of civics teaching, their cognitive approach to electoral participation may therefore be qualitatively different from that of older electoral cohorts – developing into a less deferential approach.

I develop these existing debates by devising a framework which incorporates elements from all three of scenarios. This involves combining aspects of rational choice and socio-structural explanations of political behaviour to argue that both individual characteristics and social environment impact upon the decision-making processes of potential electors. From this, I argue that the effects of education on turnout are complex, many, and varied and should not be accepted unquestioningly as static or universal

across or within age groups. Young people today are not a homogenous group so to focus only on age would be to miss important educational differences (see Janmaat et al 2014; Hoskins et al 2016). Equally, it should not be assumed that only one group of young people is abstaining. Rather, we should approach explanations to the youth participation puzzle by assessing educational variation and the different mechanisms through which it acts within the universal condition of 'youth'.

Specifically, my thesis concentrates the development of individuals' attitudes and approaches towards politics and their subsequent impact on turnout decisions. A common theme I identify within the theories presented is a collection of attitudes associated with political disaffection. This comprises both individuals' perceptions *and* expectations, including their ideals for representative democracy, judgements on its operation, views about themselves as political participants, and their experiences of participation. Matched to each of these elements, disaffection can be exhibited and felt to varying degrees, and in diverse ways. All young people would be expected to hold more negative than positive views of formal politics, its operation and opportunities in response to their educational experiences. This can be viewed as an absolute form of disaffection where the shift from less deferential to self-actualising education is thought to be encouraging a more critical citizen in younger generations (Maslow 1943; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Norris 1999, 2011). Here, individuals are more likely to question established practices, feel less duty-bound, and exercise agency against dominant societal-level norms. Against this, however, some young people would demonstrate a frustrated and dissatisfied form of disaffection; they might hold high expectations so be disappointed by the reality they encounter. Others, contrastingly, might start with low expectations and be indifferent to democratic ideals, leading them to adopt a form of disaffection better characterised by alienation and apathy.

Individual voter turnout remains the central dependent variable this thesis is designed to explain. However, I am first interested in the extent to which and how educational experiences, at the individual level – for example the type, level, and institution, felt in the context of this increasingly well-educated youth electorate – generate the two dimensions of disaffection. What are the mechanisms through which one young person develops a sense of dissatisfaction with politics and another, one of alienation? It is my contention that these attitudes offer valuable insight into the reasons why the high aggregate education level enjoyed by the youngest cohort of electors has not resulted in

their significantly increased turnout potential. Consequently, I assess how disaffection attitudes and educational experiences can then operate in tandem to shape an individual's participation preferences. Additionally, allied to their reinforcing or mitigating the conventional pro-voting education effects, why abstention then arises. Within the overarching research inquiry, two more questions subsequently arise:

2. *To what extent and how do educational experiences in youth shape young people's political attitudes and approaches to political participation?*
3. *To what extent and how are young people's political attitudes and approaches to political participation, alongside their educational experiences, significant in determining their turnout behaviours at general elections?*

These address issues of how young people's electoral participation choices is best described, how it compares to the wider electorate and varies among young people, and why young people of different educational backgrounds come to participate political (or not) in the ways that they do.

I present a new explanatory framework to examine these questions – the *disaffected citizenry* – which draws its inspiration from Norris' critical citizens (1999, 2011). It combines this model with other leading theories, notably that of repertoire replacement and the sorting model, and adapts them using age-related ideas found within the wider field of youth participation research. From doing so it argues that, perhaps counterintuitively, *educational expansion and an emancipatory-individualist pedagogical shift are responsible for an emergent non-voting disaffected citizenry*. This group is characterised by reluctance to engage in formal electoral politics, reporting lower individual turnout as well as largely negative perceptions of formal politics (an absolute disaffection). Two claims concerning young electors are nested within this, with stated changes to education: 1) *reinforcing and strengthening the negative effect associated with possessing a relatively lower level of educational experience among a non-HE youth (alienated-disaffection)*, and 2) *encouraging a more demanding and selective approach to politics and participation among an HE youth (dissatisfied-disaffection)*. The work presented tests these claims in which disaffection is assumed to be not only more prevalent in youth but a more significant turnout determinant; *as a result of educational changes, both its expansion and shifting emphasis, young people's participation preferences*

and resultant electoral behaviours are defined to a much greater extent by political disaffection than is seen for other, older electors.

My principal contribution is in presenting, testing, and refining a thesis which expresses this view, that to understand the youth participation puzzle we must rethink conventional expectations surrounding positive education effects on electoral participation. Different educational experiences in youth, in the context of educational expansion and changing pedagogical positions, can see forms of disaffection developing which are strong enough to hold a more prominent position in young people's political character than for other, older electors. It is this which causes them to abstain. Historic deference to formal politics and elections-based participation, grounded in notions of obligation and duty, has receded to the extent that electoral participation can no longer be guaranteed even among the highly educated and a more educated cohort.

In this explanation, the proposed disaffected citizenry further comprises three types of non-voter. Demonstrating dissatisfied-disaffection are (1) *frustrated electors* and (2) *engaged activists*. Both are expected to possess HE experiences with the former maintaining a commitment to voting but lacking partisan mobilisation while the latter embraces an alternative participation repertoire in which voting is side-lined. In contrast, those typically possessing no HE experience are considered (3) *marginalised citizens*, who express alienated-disaffection. They are likely to withdraw from politics completely, their declining social status and positioning in an age of educational inflation leaving them without electoral encouragement – both for the principle of voting and on polling day itself. Identification of these different non-voter types is helpful in framing the mechanisms through which educational experiences operate and in identifying what interventions might be applied, and to whom. A fourth type of young person, labelled here as the *mobilised voter*, represents those individuals who continue to turn out at elections. Social network and partisan mobilisation, both often tied to a higher level of education, are presented as key in understanding this behaviour and in maintaining unequal turnout across young people today.

III. A British case study

The analysis I present concentrates on the case of youth participation in UK general elections for the Westminster parliament. Clearly, by restricting the study to a single case

the generalisability of any findings is limited since unique party and electoral systems apply. However, as I defend in the methodology (Chapter 3) and return to within my concluding discussions in Chapter 8, there is much to be gained from adopting this approach. In this thesis I build and refine the proposed explanatory framework. By considering it in the British case, I can assess its initial usefulness in a single setting, modify where appropriate, and then recommend its application elsewhere alongside consideration of the additional institutional caveats which may need to be incorporated. Moreover, the youth participation puzzle is especially pronounced in the UK. There has been a concerted effort by policy makers to encourage HE attendance, including a 2001 Labour Party manifesto pledge to achieve 50 per cent of young people going into university (Labour 2001). HE attendance also rose by 44 per cent between 1999 and 2009 (UCAS 2010) and is now at record high levels with predictions of half a million young people in 2014/15 (BBC News 2014). Meanwhile, youth turnout plummeted to just 37 per cent in the 2005 general election (Sloam 2007: 548-9), is still yet to recover to a majority voting, and is one of the lowest youth turnout rates in Europe (Fieldhouse et al 2007).

It is also a case in which there is much attention already focused and yet room for more understanding. In the Political Studies Association's *Beyond the Youth Citizenship Commission: Young People and Politics* report UK academics have come together to consider obstacles to increased youth turnout and possible strategies for supporting their greater involvement in elections (Mycock and Tonge 2014). At a governmental level, there has been citizenship education introduced into English schools in 2001 with a view to instilling political knowledge and reinforcing notions of civic duty (Keating et al 2010; Kisby and Sloam 2012). A collection of youth engagement organisations has united under the banner of The League of Young Voters (2015) to promote and support youth electoral participation. Most recently, under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn the Labour Party has established a Shadow Minister for Young People and Voter Registration. However, from an academic perspective the participation puzzle itself has been relatively under-explored in Britain. My focus on a single case therefore allows the research also to speak both to academics and a wider policy audience. It provides insight into the electoral decision-making processes of young people in this particular setting to inform policy recommendations and strategies devised to encourage a more politically active British youth. Nevertheless, by studying the framework here I can then consider its wider application in other contexts.

IV. Thesis structure

In Chapter 1, I present an overview of existing literature in the study of voter turnout and that which relates to my specific research question. I introduce four leading approaches relevant to this research, those which focus on: a) the individual as the principal agent, choosing their behaviours based on independent decision-making calculations, b) the impact of socio-structural forces which shape attitudes and perceptions, and establish normative rules and expectations for behaviours, c) the institutional arrangements which determine ‘rules of the game’, the formal structures within which voting takes place, and d) the socio-political environment of any given election, including the issues at stake, the policies prioritised, and level of party competition, alongside wider political events occurring during the previous electoral term. I pay particular attention within this to conventional, long-standing assumptions regarding the roles of education and age in influencing a turnout decision. This includes the traditional ideas on the advantages ‘more education’ can bring – both from rational choice and sociological perspectives – and the disadvantages associated with youth. These discussions offer a backdrop to the participation puzzle, identifying what is currently known, ways in which the study of voter turnout can be approached, and why much of the common literature fails to offer a convincing explanation for the puzzle.

In Chapter 2 I develop these initial explorations and present my own original contribution, the non-voting disaffected citizenry, as a framework for combining a range of current and historical thinking developed on low youth turnout and *alternative* education effects. As explained, I look at how the puzzle can be attributable both to HE and non-HE young people, the expansion of HE affecting the dynamic of conventional education effects for both groups. I discuss repertoire replacement literature (Norris 2003; Inglehart 1990; Dalton 2008a, 2011; Dalton et al 2013; Stolle and Hooghe 2005: 159-64) and sorting model theory (Nie et al 1996; Campbell 2009; Persson 2011, 2013; Tenn 2005), respectively, to consider the behaviours and impact of both educational groups. These are then developed using additional literature so as to identify types of disaffection and associated participation preferences. This includes consideration of participation opportunities (Verba et al 1995; Platt 2008; Schlozman et al 2012) and the advantages on-course students enjoy from their student status and campus setting to make an alternative repertoire of activity more accessible and easier to adopt (Crossley

2008; Ibrahim 2011; Schulman and Levine 2012). It also involves more attention to work on efficacy and an argument that social exclusion experienced by non-HE youth can additionally lead these young people to under-value their own ability and/or perceive the political world as unresponsive to their concerns (Condon and Holleque 2013; Henn and Foard 2014; Wray-Lake and Hart 2012; Gecas 1989; Hoskins et al 2016). It is from these that the conceptual framework, centred on the frustrated elector, engaged activist, and marginalised citizen, emerges.

The remainder of the thesis concentrates on testing and refining this proposed framework. In Chapter 3, my methods and methodology are outlined. Here I review the decision to focus on the British case, the operationalisation of the key concepts of interest, and the research hypotheses which form out of the disaffected citizenry explanations. The research is designed to examine the processes by which individuals come to participate in certain ways and how they adopt distinct approaches to political participation within which these decisions are taken. Simultaneously the methods are designed to study the moderating role of disaffection in explaining differences in turnout rates across educational and age groups, the latter being representative of educational cohorts as well as biological age. I have therefore taken inspiration from a scientific realist approach in which the researcher's main concern is to uncover evidence which can support or refute claims on the mechanisms through which an outcome comes about (Kemp and Holmwood 2003; Nash 2005). Adopting a quantitative method, I use secondary survey data from the British Election Study (BES), British Participation Study (BPS), and the youth-only Citizens in Transition Study (CITS) and a range of statistical techniques, including ordinary least squares regression and binary and multinomial logistic regression as well as latent class analysis. In Chapter 3, the strengths and weaknesses of these datasets and methods of analysis are introduced while I refer back to these issues as I take the reader through the empirical chapters.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 are where I present the testing of my hypotheses. Chapter 4 begins with preliminary analysis of the BES to track changes over time and differences within the British electorate relating to age, education, and turnout. This indicates the extent of the participation puzzle in Britain and its particular prominence among young people. Using a repeated cross-sectional design, it also highlights where changes have been most apparent and how different electoral groups have seen their behaviours change. These studies are extended in Chapter 5 to map attitude change over time, examining the

possibility that the decline in turnout and rise in aggregate education have also occurred concurrently with a rise in disaffection. The chapter then goes on to consider disaffection within the contemporary British (and youth) electorate using the BPS and CITS. It assesses the extent of variation across the survey samples according to age and education in four related areas: internal efficacy, external efficacy, perceived political responsiveness, and ideals for the operation of representative democracy. From this I find, contrary to propositions, that young people – while still disaffected – are not more disaffected than older generations. This is true both when studying disaffection in an absolute sense (that relating solely to perceptions of politics) and relative one (that based on the tension between ideals and perceptions, a possible deficit). Therefore, any abstention, despite what theories might have us believe about generational attitude changes, does not appear to be the result of a greater prevalence of disaffection among today's young people. Educational variation within the youth sample is, however, evident and suggestive of some of the proposed mechanisms which connect educational experiences to abstention through alienated and dissatisfied forms of disaffection.

I then move to investigate the impact of these disaffection measures on turnout in the 2010 general election. From this it becomes apparent that while young people are not more disaffected than others they are much more affected by these considerations when deciding whether or not to vote. They are deterred from participating to a greater extent than older groups when they have high democratic ideals but a perceived responsiveness score that suggests they do not believe these are being met. They are also discouraged if their internal efficacy is low. Thus, in different ways, by combining attitudes and behaviours within the analysis, *non-voting* young people can be characterised as being a disaffected citizenry and more so than older generations. I develop this analysis with a study of the youth electorate specifically, assessing the prevalence and impact of certain disaffection attitudes across the CITS sample and how they correspond with different electoral outcomes. Young people, again, are seen to be a constituency impacted upon by their views of politics and less guaranteed in their turnout.

The framework I present describes a voting decision as part of an individual's wider approach to participation and their political character. There are distinct behavioural manifestations which might be used to differentiate between types of non-voting disaffection. In turn, these offer thoughts on the reasoning we would expect to be driving these decisions. An individual who is disaffected and non-voting but who adopts a

participation repertoire in which alternative participation is prioritised above voting would lead us to see strengths in the repertoire replacement explanatory theory (represented in the proposed framework by my engaged activists). If someone withdraws from all forms of activity, they alternatively offer support for relative education theories and the marginalised citizen I propose. Consequently, in Chapter 6 I explore participation repertoires, utilising latent class analysis. In the BPS I assess the degree of variation within the survey samples on their participation preferences and experiences – across both age and education groups – and start the process of building support behind the mechanisms through which individuals come to abstain. It finds that young people, as well as being more likely to abstain, are less likely to prioritise voting as a future participation activity. Thus there is further evidence suggestive of their non-voting character. Equally, behavioural manifestations associated with marginalised citizens and frustrated electors seem to be present, although little evidence of engaged activists pursuing repertoire replacement is offered. Latent class analysis is then applied to a CITS sample of non-voting young people to build the typological model and identify distinct types of youth abstainer around which my explanations can be framed.

I conclude my empirical work in Chapter 7 to build on the exploratory work of the CITS latent class analysis, and consider in more detail the causal mechanisms through which particular political characters develop in youth. I look at how pro-voting non-voting young people differ from those who do vote, why some young people develop an interest in electoral participation, and why others favour – and to what extent – alternative participation behaviours. Structural equation modelling is employed to test these mechanisms through path analysis. The findings suggest that key to these explanations are processes of mobilisation, both by parties and by social networks.

In my concluding chapter, Chapter 8, I refine the framework using this additional concept of mobilisation and present a two-stage approach in which a demand-mobilisation – that which builds an interest in participating – precedes a supply-mobilisation, one which requires parties to make clear appeals to the youth electorate to aid young people in identifying a party to support. I consider the implications this has for public policy, notably focusing on debates surrounding a lowering of the voting age, and ways in which future research might build our understanding of the proposed mechanisms further. Finally, I assess the applicability of this framework, tested here within the British case, to other established democracies. This highlights the contextual characteristics which

may impact upon its relevance and the ways in which we could test the framework from a cross-national perspective. The research concludes that young people are not the puzzling participants who we first observe. Instead, they are demonstrating new ways of engaging with politics – a less deferential, more selective approach – in response to their educational experiences in which attitudes and agency play a more prominent role. They can be usefully understood as forming a non-voting disaffected citizenry which requires mobilisation and fresh incentives to participate, their rising education levels unable to guarantee their participation.

1. Voter turnout and the participation puzzle

The prominence of electoral behaviour in the study of political participation means there exists already a wide body of literature dedicated to trying to understand the determinants of turnout choices. In this chapter, I review this literature with particular emphasis on conventional education- and age-effects theories, demonstrating why Brody's participation puzzle (1978) has emerged as an area of interest for scholars. These arguments are presented within discussions of wider explanatory approaches – concerned with rational choice, socio-structural forces, institutionalism, and electoral context to describe how combinations of factors, structure *and* agency, interact to alter, reinforce, or mitigate certain tendencies. From this, I identify places where existing work is either lacking or unconvincing, and/or where alternative thinking is needed to build more comprehensive explanations for the puzzle posed. This forms the foundation for Chapter 2 and the context in which a new theoretical framework is proposed and modelled.

1.1. Education effects: classic assumptions

The participation puzzle is ultimately driven by a traditional conception of education effects centred on the positive relationship between individual voter turnout and educational level. Mayer states education's role as a key explanatory variable is largely uncontested (2011: 633), an assertion supported by many individual studies (see meta-analysis by Smets and van Ham 2013; Verba et al 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Interestingly, it is still not universally the case, however. Using the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, Gallego observes no significant education gap in Spain and Chile, for example, and only fairly moderate increases in individual turnout in France, Denmark, and Ireland for electors with more education. However, in countries such as America and Poland there are dramatic increases in individuals' voting probability as their own education rises. The UK demonstrates a similar trend, even if not as extreme (2015: 24-6). Looking within the US, Dee finds for each additional year spent in education the likelihood of voting increases by an average of 3.8 percentage points (2004: 1713; see also Tenn 2007; Simmons and Lilly 2010: 348; Stockemer 2012: 1037-9). The impact of a four-year degree could therefore be as high as a 16 percentage point advantage over individuals who are unable or choose not to pursue Higher Education (HE).

In the most classical sense – and that which leads us to be puzzled by current electoral trends – education raises participation potential by affecting individual’s understanding of politics and voting. This view is encapsulated by the ‘civic education hypothesis’ (Hillygus 2005: 27-8; Galston 2001: 219) in which education equips young people for entering the electorate and engaging through meaningful participation. Such discussions typically focus on independent decision-making and are heavily influenced by a rational choice approach; having more education alters the balance between the costs and benefits of participating so it appears more accessible and attractive, and thus more probable.

For example, a higher level of education can confer political skills, knowledge, and interest deemed necessary for political engagement and, in particular, voting in elections. Educated individuals should possess greater (political) literacy, an interest in following campaigns, and the ability to evaluate parties and their programmes (Verba et al 1995: 305). Even where learning is not overtly political, transferable skills should make them feel more capable of unpicking rhetoric, considering short- and long-term policy impacts, and weighing up expected benefits (Condon and Holleque 2013). The process, in theory, becomes easier and so some costs which might deter participation are reduced.

Where education provides individuals with an explicit understanding of politics – for example, citizenship education – electoral participation is further supported. This might include learning how parliament operates, the mechanics of electoral systems, and the levels at which different decisions are made. As part of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, Schulz and colleagues found across 38 countries, 22 civic curriculums emphasised parliamentary and governmental systems and 20, voting and elections (2010: 27).² While evidently political content is not always the focus – human rights enjoyed the highest frequency here (25 countries) – many young people receive some level of training in how to participate. On a practical level, simply knowing how and with whom to register or how to complete a ballot paper can be important in encouraging a positive turnout decision (Gallego 2009, 2010, 2015). Where young people report lacking sufficient political understanding they can describe feeling ill-prepared and wary of voting (Henn and Foard 2012: 53-4). Education overcomes such deterrents by

² Covering Asia (5), Europe (26), Latin America (6), and Australasia (1) (2010: 15).

providing relevant knowledge and transferable skills which can boost self-confidence and internal efficacy. Simultaneously, in generating political awareness it can then raise individuals' expectations for prospective benefits. If they can understand the range of issues upon which policy is made they can consider more fully how they will be affected.

Cognitive proficiency cannot necessarily be equated with *political* cognitive proficiency, however (Jennings and Stoker 2008: 3). Skills and interests imparted through formal education are wide-ranging and not exclusively or always those supporting political participation, electoral or otherwise. Not all academic disciplines foster comprehensive knowledge of politics or even a level of political awareness (Hillygus 2005; Stockemer 2012: 1037-9; Paterson 2009). Natural sciences require and promote skillsets which are perhaps less directly applicable to politics while social sciences more frequently focus on contemporary social and political issues and developing critical thinking. Engaging in such discussions can be crucial for allowing socio-political learning to take place (Beaumont 2011: 218-9). Vocational courses, with their greater focus on specific professions, will also tend to develop different skills than the academic courses of HE and ones which are perhaps less well suited for political activity (Van der Werfhorst 2007; Janmaat et al 2014; Persson 2012). Practical skills and local dimensions are emphasised, especially in more market-led vocational educational systems (Hoskins et al 2016: 73). Furthermore, where citizenship education exists there can still be vastly different experiences across schools and students, as the English example shows. Recent reforms including the creation of academies and free schools are allowing institutions to bypass National Curriculum requirements while there is further variability in teaching, focus, and timetabling (Kerr 2014; Kisby and Sloam 2012). 'More' education – measured by amount, level, or years – in itself may not engender a more politically engaged and competent individual.

Education is nevertheless also credited with raising individuals' awareness of and interest in the political world through informal processes. In Beaumont's four mechanisms of socio-political learning she emphasises the importance of being located in politically active communities and acquiring political skills through 'learning by doing', not only through formal teaching (2010; Kenny 1992; Shulman and Levine 2012). Purely attainment-derived educational indicators may not satisfactorily explain the classic education-voting nexus, yet much exposure to politics occurs for students through experiences in and around university and college campuses. They are politically

stimulating environments where politics is discussed and opportunities for civic action are presented (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 57); student unions run elections and campaigns, political parties are represented by student societies, debates are held on current affairs, and political figures are invited to speak (Cone et al 2001: 6). Individuals can become informed and gain practical experience of democratic and political processes through their extracurricular activities, preparing them for formal electoral participation. Even just entering, living, and working within an HE environment – possessing student status – can therefore boost turnout potential (Tenn 2007: 541-4). Questions nevertheless remain on whether all young people take advantage of these kinds of opportunities when they are presented. Even an informal learning perspective might miss variation between students in how they respond to their own educational experiences and approach political participation or a turnout decision.

1.1.1. Education, voting, and rational choice approaches

When studying education effects on individual turnout, attention frequently focuses on the individual as an actor engaging in their own decision-making processes. This takes inspiration from what has become a leading model of voter behaviour, the rational choice economic voting theory (Downs 1957). Here, every individual elector acts independently and rationally to maximise their own personal utility. Hence, decisions on whether or not to vote, or who to vote for, are ultimately determined by their own assessments of whether the costs of voting – becoming informed, registering, and actively going to the polls – outweigh their expected benefits, such as the likelihood a preferred candidate wins or policies serving their self-interest are mandated. Even where more historical sociological approaches of the Columbia School have prioritised socio-demographic determinants of participation (Berelson et al 1954), rational choice logic would argue such patterns only appear due to similarities within social groups on the costs and benefits being experienced. As expressed above, a conventional understanding is that the highly educated face fewer costs and more benefits, the less well educated more costs and fewer benefits.

Education's role in raising turnout does not go wholly unquestioned, however, even within this approach. Berinsky and Lenz argue its influence is ambiguous, perhaps simply a proxy for socio-economic variables established prior to attending and/or upon leaving education (2011: 359; Kam and Palmer 2008). For example, it could reflect traits

and demographic features of which young people are already in possession and which impact on their chosen educational track as well as likely turnout (Persson 2012). HE is to some extent self-selecting and so the issue of importance for turnout variation may be social class. As individuals then leave education, further social class dimensions emerge whereby HE graduates, typically holding professional occupations and paying more tax, believe they hold a greater stake in society. They may assess themselves as having more to lose and more to gain from participating. Nonetheless, the above discussions suggest we could still expect the experiences associated with education to reinforce, if not generate, the greater turnout potential consistently observed in highly educated individuals.

Either way, in many respects voting is not a conditional phenomenon. If an individual increases their own education level, the costs they face should be reduced independently of those encountered by anyone else. By this logic, rising aggregate education should see participation increase. For elections in particular, with voting being fairly low cost in comparison to other political activities, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand why turnout is falling. It is true that benefits may be more 'zero-sum', the possible outcomes of an elected government's policy programme unlikely to see all social groups benefitting in the short-term (Nie et al 1996: 101-2). However, the potential to influence the decision so that one's own utility is maximised should see the benefit component to any calculation staying constant even if election and policy outcomes are not guaranteed. The conventional civic education hypothesis, when framed using rational choice logic, consequently generates the initial puzzle.

A leading criticism levelled at rational choice, however, is its assumption that all electors are rational, informed, self-interested, and isolated. For purists, individuals decide whether or not to vote based solely on an ability to judge one's own utility and choose the behaviour which will maximise this. In reality, however, a single vote will rarely matter in any election, particularly in non-proportional systems, and thus the rational and arguably educated choice is to abstain. So, perhaps as people become more educated, they become more aware of the irrationality of voting? The fact that most people do vote, however, presents a participation puzzle of another kind and suggests this is not the case (Blais 2000). Instead, 'bounded rationality' is often exercised. Fully informed and rational decisions are rarely if ever possible because individuals only access and process a limited amount of information regardless of interest or capability (Simon 1997). Very

few voters read every party's manifesto in its entirety nor are fully aware of how opinion polls and issues of marginality relate to individual constituencies. Moreover, accumulating and assessing all available information is difficult even for the most educated individuals. The truly rational decision may be to abstain yet on the basis of limited knowledge and ability, individuals can still come to believe their vote matters, that the benefits outweigh the costs.

1.1.2. Education, voting, and socio-structural forces

Rational choice in its strictest application is only ever able to offer 'very partial' explanation for turnout (Blais 2000: 137). The leading approach applied historically, epitomised by the Columbia School, emphasised the role of socio-structural forces. Its focus was on socialisation, particularly within the family, and how individuals internalise the values, habits, and norms of their immediate environment to vote in a certain way (Berelson et al 1954). In the UK, for example, young people were commonly found to mirror parents' voting choices, suggestive of the transmission of partisan preferences from one generation to the next (Butler and Stokes 1969: 47). Importantly, this partisan alignment, based predominantly on social class, had individuals not only being more likely to vote for the same party as those around them but also to go unquestioningly to the polls in a form of collective responsibility reflecting class and family solidarity. Here, it is not a question of instrumental costs and benefits but of expected and learnt behaviours.

This approach – in which individuals exercise no agency, simply repeating the actions of others – has become fairly unpopular. The continued presence of rational choice thinking – even if adapted – in many turnout studies is reflective of views that strict sociological models underestimate the role of the individual actor. As explained, where social class patterns are observed, it may result from shared experiences generating similar costs and benefit calculations. Equally, even if relevant historically, it may no longer be an appropriate explanation in many countries. For one thing, it assumes individuals encounter homogenous networks in which they are subject to only one set of conventions and norms. In the industrialised world, we are seemingly becoming increasingly atomised (Putnam 2000), so it is questionable whether tight-knit and homogenous communities still exist to the same extent as previously and if so, if these alone determine an individual's political approach. The influx of mass media and internet

communication are both likely to broaden the range of opinions and information individuals can access. Furthermore, if socialisation was the dominant force, it would be unclear as to why turnout is falling. Reproduction of voting patterns would imply at least steady turnout rates. For example, for non-HE individuals, typically associated with working class backgrounds, we would expect turnout to remain constant if familial socialisation processes were operating. While perhaps less participative than middle class electors, family habits associated with voting for the labour movement and union-backed parties should see them turn out despite changing socio-economic structures (Heath et al 1991).

In the UK, where social class voting was previously a cornerstone of politics, there has been a noticeable decline in 'tribal voting'. Increasingly individuals are not feeling bound to participate in the same way as other members of their social group. Young people are not always voting as their parents once did – a demonstration of partisan dealignment (Clarke et al 2004: 43). Instead there has been growing issue-based voting, where we can view voters more as consumers. They seek a party programme which best represents their current concerns and interests (Himmelweit et al 1985). Others many defer to considerations of valence and evaluations of party and politician competence (Clarke et al 2004, 2011). Normative pressures to participate (and in particular ways) therefore appear weaker, electors now seemingly exercising increasing independence in their political behaviours. Both issue and valence voting theories, while not exclusively rational choice in approach, suggest some element of internal calculation. Individuals weigh up information, from their own experiences *and* the political presentations being made to them, to choose who to vote for and if to vote at all.

The sociological approach should not be dismissed, however. There has been renewed interest, for example, in the impact of social structures and their interaction with calculated decision-making, notably through their shaping of people's attitudes (see Campbell 2013; Rolfe 2012). Much can initially be taken from Campbell et al's seminal work on 'The American Voter' within the Michigan Model of voting behaviour (1960). A 'funnel of causality' framework based on the proximity of determinants to the final voting decision, led Campbell and colleagues to argue that voter choice in US elections resulted largely from partisan identification. This shaped the way in which individuals assessed candidates and prioritised issues, in turn dictating their voting behaviour. A Democrat attachment would see Democrat candidates being viewed more favourably, irrespective

of policies and attributes. Voting can be habit forming and electors do not forget former loyalties, previous party policies, or past government records to focus solely on self-interest within a specific election context (Bartels 2000; Green et al 2002). While Campbell et al still argued that partisanship was developed through family socialisation, their emphasis shifted to the role of personal preferences and attitudes. They were interested in how political predispositions are absorbed and create preferences or ideas against which an elector approaches an election. Despite not being primarily concerned with party choice in this thesis, such an approach is useful for thinking about how rational choice and sociological approaches might interact.

A major element of this socialisation hypothesis concerns social networks. As Campbell argues, 'understanding the causal mechanisms underpinning individual-level factors often, perhaps always, requires attention to the ways in which individuals are connected to others' (2013: 36; see Rolfe 2012; Pattie and Johnston 1995). Networks provide signposting and shortcuts to help individuals make decisions, being a source of both information and encouragement. Recruitment into politics through social connections can, for example, be key in determining whether or not an individual votes (Verba et al 1995). Sometimes it is overt in the case of being directly asked to participate. On other occasions it is more informal where individuals respond to normative cues and choose whether to adhere to expected behaviours within their environment. Regional, neighbourhood, and even household effects have been studied to suggest individuals are more likely to vote in particular contexts because they subconsciously internalise the behaviours of others and incorporate these into their voting decision (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2012; Cutts and Fieldhouse 2009; Johnston et al 2004; Pattie and Johnston 2000, 1995). This might include areas with high concentrations of a particular social demographic group which develops a group consciousness where everyone participates to ensure the collective voice is heard (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2008). Turnout may also be more likely in two-electoral households – a more micro-level network – where we expect kinship to transfer and reinforce political ideas (Cutts and Fieldhouse 2009). In another respect, social costs may be incurred by abstainers if they are located within electorally active networks and are seen to be rejecting the dominant behavioural norms (Franklin 2004: 51; Blais 2000; Campbell 2013; Gerber et al 2008). Expressive benefits to participating are thus created.

Crucially, a choice remains and individuals need to balance the expectations of different networks within which they are located *and* their own individual circumstances where tensions arise between these. Being asked or expected to participate by one group of friends does not inevitably mean an individual votes. It does, however, make it more likely than if there was no encouragement. Social interactions with politically engaged individuals, in particular discussing politics, can be highly significant in raising awareness of elections and enabling individuals to become more informed (McClurg 2003; Verba et al 1995). They can also generate an interest in politics more generally to boost engagement in alternative, non-electoral activities and to maintain awareness in between elections so the start-up costs during campaigns are reduced. They do not have to 're-inform' themselves when an election is called. Thinking about education, the rising attainment levels alongside citizenship teaching innovations, should see young people's social interactions having greater potential for on-going political discussion. There are also new forums arising, such as online social media platforms, which offer alternative locations for this (Conroy et al 2012). Thus the puzzle is again presented.

It is fair to argue that not all individuals will be centrally located among political elites. Social sorting and hierarchies remain even when education rises. Social positioning processes are to some extent zero-sum in nature (Nie et al 1996; Rolfe 2002). Not everyone can be at the centre of politics. I return to this in Chapter 2 as a core component of my own explanatory framework. While there may be more potential today for political interaction it does not mean the depth or type of discussion will be the same for all individuals. Networks invariably vary and there will likely be competing interests within these so that politics does not always dominate. If not at the centre of politics, political discussion may be lacking. It is also true that not all young people, or all electors, have access to online political groups or indeed choose to access them. Is it a case of too much choice and too much diversity in our networks today, that political discussion is being diluted? Research with young people would suggest not. Moves from more homogenous to heterogeneous networks in industrialised societies may make it more difficult to attribute voting to a single socialisation process, yet Belgian researchers find network diversity can actually increase participation (Quintelier et al 2012). It promotes disagreement and debate, forcing individuals to justify or alter their positions, constantly reflecting on their own political views (Huckfeldt et al 2005: 21; Putnam 2000). Political identity is strengthened during this process. Subsequent participation can then further

diversify individuals' networks in a reciprocal relationship as they meet even more people and seek out new information (Quintelier et al 2012).

Apolitical network interactions can also still have a positive impact. Network activities can garner civic spirit through social capital and by attaching individuals to the communities in which the outcomes of elections will have an effect (Putnam 2000). It can also build a generalised sense of trust. There is subsequently both an individual stake and community stake for electors to consider. A single vote might not matter but the voting bloc of a community or social group can be more decisive. While modern societies have become more atomised – in Putnam's words we are '[b]owling alone' (2000) – in certain instances we would still expect strong social ties to be in existence. University campuses are one such example where networks of politically engaged *and* apolitical young people can interact. There is diversity but there is also community (Crossley 2008; Crossley and Ibrahim 2011). Therefore, once more, we still cannot satisfactorily explain the paradox of abstention by many of these young people.

There are nevertheless useful lessons to be learnt. There is support here for considering both social structure and agency, both environment and individual characteristics. Sociological factors can determine the networks, norms, and values individuals encounter. They can also influence the ways in which they perceive themselves and the world around them, as well as how they approach any turnout decision-making. They shape the way in which decision-making is conducted and how individuals make sense of the range of potential costs, benefits, and preferences they encounter. However, there is always a choice and it is the task of this thesis to understand how this vast array of pro-voting education effects is seemingly unable to guarantee this choice as a pro-voting decision.

1.2. The role of institutions

No study of voting behaviour can feasibly ignore the role of formal institutions. They are important forces determining the nature of the political environment individuals encounter. Debate might exist over their exact level of electoral influence but they undoubtedly set the 'rules of the game', institutionalism believing such structures must always be a starting point for understanding behaviours (Rhodes 1995). Recognising their impact can be especially important in cross-national studies and when thinking

about the wider applicability of theories and explanations. Issues such as party system, proportionality, centralisation, and compulsory voting can all affect turnout (Blais 2006; Geys 2006; Powell 1982; Jackman 1987). For example, turnout is unsurprisingly consistently higher where compulsory voting is effectively enforced (Engleén 2007). This can make it harder to compare across cases and isolate other turnout determinants while we would also not expect to witness such dramatic changes over time. In Belgium, for example, turnout in five European Parliament elections between 1979 and 1999³ did not fall below 90 per cent. Contrastingly, in Germany, turnout fell from 65.7 to 45.2 per cent (Franklin 2001: 311). In the Belgian case, themes similar to the participation puzzle might be better studied with reference to attitudes as opposed to actual voting behaviour.

The Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, collecting turnout data from democracies across the world, highlights further variability in accordance with a number of institutional factors. Plurality-majority systems (n=63) demonstrate an average turnout of just 59 per cent globally whereas proportional representation (n=66) reports an average of 68 per cent (2015). Proportional systems, where there is perhaps a closer link between an individual's vote and the electoral outcome, appear to foster more interest in electoral participation. Moreover, coalition governments tend to be more common in such scenarios, meaning the nature of the party system itself changes. Smaller parties can hope to enjoy greater influence and voters may subsequently feel there is more choice. Conversely, on occasion there may be too much choice and some individuals could find it difficult to make a decision, even if this is a minority experience. Mirroring this contradiction, Geys' review of the empirical literature – a meta-analysis of 83 aggregate-level studies on voter turnout – concludes that within the field 'little agreement has been reached about what explains [voter turnout]' (2006: 653). What is certain, however, is that the settings in which individuals act remain important, constraining and/or enabling the decisions they make. After refining a theory relevant to any given case it is therefore always necessary to consider its implications and wider use in alternative scenarios, and how institutional conditions affect this.

Educational structures can also differ across cases. Issues such as the number of years expected within compulsory schooling, the typical age at which individuals enter HE,

³ 1979, 1984, 1989, 1994, and 1999.

entry requirements and fee-status, the type of education delivered within schools, and the level of state control can all change the dynamic of how young people are likely to respond to their own education and that of the environment around them (see Hoskins et al 2016). Citizenship education provision can also vary (Schulz et al 2010; Kisby and Sloam 2012). These differences must be considered too to ensure the assumptions surrounding education effects, conventional or otherwise, are not inappropriate within the context they are being applied.

When studying participation within a single case, electors would be assumed to face broadly similar institutional conditions. Variation in turnout consequently becomes much harder to explain through a solely institutional approach. Institutional factors can still vary, however, in their impact across groups. In countries such as the UK and America, all electors must register to vote. This can present barriers to participation by generating an additional bureaucratic stage in becoming electorally active (Highton 2000; Ansolabehere 2005). In the language of rational choice, they are a cost. This is universal so would not explain variation, yet research suggests it has more impact on particular under-registered groups. Private renters, young people, and students, who are often more residentially mobile, are impacted upon to a greater degree than older, more settled members of the population who merely need to re-confirm their registration status (Cabinet Office 2013; Gallego 2015). Some individuals may also be wary of interacting with official state agencies or encounter language barriers. If students are living in university accommodation during term-time yet are registered at their parental home, the need to vote at a specified polling station – or postal vote before polling day – may also affect this group more than others (Highton 2000; Niemi and Hanmer 2010: 302).⁴ Under individual electoral registration, introduced in the UK in 2014,⁵ additional responsibility has been placed onto young people to initiate the process, potentially exacerbating this issue. Restricted polling station opening times with no opportunities for online voting can discriminate against working individuals who may struggle to cast a ballot within the given times (Electoral Commission 2002). Combining institutionalist

⁴ In 2014, 76 per cent of UK 18-19 year olds and 71 per cent of 20-24 year olds were registered to vote (Electoral Commission 2014b). In 2008, the most up-to-date figures available, students were only fractionally more likely to be on the register, at 78 per cent (Electoral Commission 2008) despite their educational experience.

⁵ June 2014 (England and Wales) and September 2014 (Scotland). An alternative form of individual electoral registration was introduced in Northern Ireland in 2002.

and rational choice logic, institutional arrangements are not always equally experienced and as such the scale of perceived (and real) costs can vary in response.

In any analysis of a puzzle initially identified from longitudinal trends, historical changes in institutional arrangements also require attention, including how developments in electoral laws and constitutional structures may have supported or hindered higher turnout (Norris 2002: 61). For Brody, such a study increased his puzzlement where turnout decline coincided with the lifting of more restrictive registration rules (1978: 292-4). Contrastingly, however, franchise extensions and lowering of the voting age can often lower the overall proportion of eligible individuals voting. In Franklin's cross-national comparisons, a move of this kind has on average seen turnout fall by 3-4 percentage points (2004: 139-40). Changes to electoral registration may also have an effect. When introduced in Northern Ireland, individual electoral registration saw 120,000 fewer electors registered (Electoral Commission 2012: 15). This might not be reflected in turnout figures⁶ but results in fewer individuals voting. According to Dahl, we have also witnessed increasing complexity in politics, for example increasing multi-level governance and more technical bureaucratic processes (1992). There has been devolution introduced in countries and EU expansion which may make it more difficult for electors to feel confident engaging in politics, irrespective of political literacy. New issues are emerging while an increasing range of electoral systems and rules are now encountered.

New institutionalist perspectives offer an appreciation that institutions do not act alone to determine behaviours (March and Olsen 1984; Hall and Taylor 1996). Clearly, individuals are never truly independent of the political world around them whether consciously (in the case of formal regulations) or not (for example, responses to party system structures). An 'old institutionalist' perspective, however, is simply unable to explain variation in turnout in situations where many institutional conditions can be held constant. A young person with HE experience and one without it enter the electorate under the same electoral rules and formal structures. Registration requirements, party and electoral systems, and (non-)compulsory voting conditions do not vary. Instead, individual and more informal social structures would be expected to interact within these instances to affect how an elector responds to the given political environment. To

⁶ Turnout is calculated against the number of registered electors so may even rise.

what extent is a multi-party system a deterrent to a particular individual, and why? Why might one individual find their willingness to vote increase under proportional representation while another prefers first-past-the-post? The emphasis of my study remains therefore on individuals' own cognitive processes and their exercising some form of personal agency – it is ultimately a study of individual decision-making.

1.3. Election context

As with institutions, attention must also be paid to electoral context. Electoral laws set the rules within which parties and electors act, but each election itself has its own specific characteristics. As Huckfeldt argued in 1979, individuals 'respond to political events, cues, and opportunities which are specific to a given environment' (1979: 579). These are proximate conditions within a funnel of causality framework. Individuals will already hold personal preferences and persuasions, as shaped by demographic and social influences, and yet factors occurring within the campaign period and on polling day can inject external considerations against which preferences are exercised (see Campbell et al 1960; Lewis-Beck et al 2008: 25-6). For Johnston and Pattie, this kind of electoral context cannot be overlooked and 'plays an important role in influencing the decision to participate' (2006: 265). For example, while Geys notes the lack of consensus on many aggregate-level factors, he goes on to highlight the significance of electoral closeness and campaign expenditure, both being positively associated with turnout (2006). Similarly, at a constituency level, marginality and campaign intensity can be important (Johnston and Pattie 2006: 264-5) as can individual candidate characteristics (Campbell and Cowley 2014).

Operating nationally there have been suggestions surrounding the influence of political offers if and where parties appear to be converging on the centre of the political spectrum (Hay 2007; Downs 1957). This can limit perceived choice between parties and make a voting decision more difficult (Hay 2007). It is a claim many politicians would refute yet the emergence of New Labour in the UK and their election victory in 1997 is considered especially suggestive of this (Barber 2005). Turnout did indeed fall in 1997 – despite being an administration-changing election, where interest would perhaps ordinarily be higher – and fell further in 2001.⁷ Where individuals lack strong

⁷ Turnout trends for UK elections mapped in Chapter 4.

partisanship this can be even more influential since they do not possess former loyalties upon which to draw. Similarly, individuals with lower levels of education may find it more difficult to identify subtle differences between parties. Attention must be paid to the actions of political elites and the offers made to the electorate, the key issues being prioritised and at which demographic constituencies, in any given contest.

The closeness of a specific election too can be important. Internationally, research by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance finds turnout to be higher in countries when elections are more competitive, defined by the leading party winning less than 50 per cent of the popular vote. These countries (n=542) record turnout ten percentage points higher than those for whom the leading party wins more than 50 per cent (n=263) (IDEA 2015). Clarke and colleagues' concept of 'pivotality' (2004: 228) suggests that where a vote is more critical and matters more – for instance, a close election race reported in media opinion polls – electors will be more inclined to vote. Even if within their own constituency the seat is not marginal, a general perception of the national competition being a tight race can influence these calculations. This is not only related to the vote but also how exciting and engaging the election is. A foregone conclusion is less likely to mobilise the masses versus a situation in which small vote swings may have big implications. Electors would also be assumed to respond to the views and likely behaviours of other members of the electorate through various opinion poll effects. For example, the prediction of Labour victory in 1992 perhaps mobilised Conservative-leaning potential abstainers more so than if a Conservative victory had seemed likely (see Crewe 1992: 486-7). Equally, in 2001, the almost foregone conclusion of Labour's victory could have increased instrumental abstention where electors believed their vote would make no difference (Crewe 2002).

Political events do not, however, need to relate to an election itself to be influential. As a case study, Evans has labelled the 1990s in British politics as a period of 'sleaze', one in which political trust went into decline in response to multiple scandals (2003). More recently, MPs' expenses misuse is thought to have negatively impacted on turnout in 2010, damaging the reputation of the political classes alongside other instances of politicians acting against public opinion, such as in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Pattie and Johnston 2012; Heath, 2011; Banaji 2008; see also Johnston and Pattie 2006: 241). Such events and criticism are not new. For example, the Profumo Affair of 1963, or in America, Watergate in 1972, or in Italy the 'Clean Hands' corruption trials of 1992, have

all had potential to discredit politicians. Nevertheless, in an information age in which the media can exercise greater scrutiny of politicians, it may be that electors have become more aware of their indiscretions over time. Journalistic style has allegedly changed from deference to contempt (Heath 2011: 136). However, these are still often one-off occurrences. Fox, for example, claims scandals have not significantly affected young people's democratic faith, even if influencing more specific opinions (2015). Is it a case that the cumulative impact of multiple scandals has rocked electorates irrevocably or is it unconvincing to suggest these are wholly to blame for turnout decline? Why and when, for example, do electors respond in such a way that sees these as reason enough to go against established social norms and abstain? The same question can also be applied to issues of policy convergence.

1.4. A youth disadvantage

The participation puzzle needs to be understood within the language of generational change. The phenomenon is becoming increasingly pronounced and most evident within the very youngest electors; each new generation is more educated and yet less participative. We must recognise the possible influence of age-based factors – those which are unrelated to education – in compounding these observed patterns and relationships. Separately, age and education are two of the most cited determinants of individual turnout, both consistently found to be significantly and positively associated with increased turnout potential (Gallego 2009: 24; Smets and van Ham 2013: 348). Debate exists as to whether the relationship for age is truly linear or perhaps curvilinear, turnout sometimes falling in old age (see Bhatti and Hansen 2012; Bhatti et al 2012). Yet, there is undoubtedly consensus on young people always being the most unlikely voters. Their participation has consequently attracted attention from numerous scholars as comprehensive reviews by Kimberlee (2002), Phelps (2012), and Dermody et al (2010), and the 2012 *Parliamentary Affairs* special edition on youth, citizenship and politics (Sloam 2012) demonstrate.

For a long time, their low electoral participation was considered the result of natural apathy and unwillingness to engage. This has been something of a mantra, particularly in the media (Banaji 2008: 543). Low youth turnout is framed in the language of being a 'youth problem'. Views are changing, however, particularly in academia where research with young people is finding them often wary of electoral politics yet still engaged,

interested, and holding political opinions. Henn and Weinstein's work with British young people found only 13 per cent claimed to have no interest in politics at all (2006: 522). Instances of political activism often see young people play a leading role, notably the Iraq War protests in 2003 (Such et al 2005), actions against increases to university tuition fees in 2010 (Theocharis 2012), and rallies across Europe in response to the global financial crisis (Sloam 2013). Even where we see disillusionment and abstention, this is not necessarily indicative of their 'switching off' from politics. Arguments of youth apathy appear unfair and, from a scholarly perspective, overly simplistic. Very little attention is given to why young people may appear apathetic and why 'youth' makes this more likely.

A more nuanced view suggests young people's position in the life-cycle – their typically being unmarried, still in education, and yet to establish themselves in 'adult roles' – means electoral and party politics lack relevance, or are at least are perceived to lack relevance. They tend to have fewer formal responsibilities, such as caring for dependents, and being either still in education or on entry-level salaries may not be significant income tax contributors. Consequently, they hold a less obvious stake in society, have fewer interactions with official state agencies, and are relieved of some of the material concerns occupying older electors. In turn, there is less incentive to vote, to engage in formal political processes, or to spend time trying to influence policy at elections (Highton and Wolfinger 2001; Goerres 2007; Ross and Sacker 2010; Gallego 2009; Quintelier 2007). Lower levels of participation might be inevitable if politics is simply not the most pressing concern. Completing their education and taking initial career steps are priorities, participation in politics instead perhaps more guaranteed only upon the later assumption of adult roles. Smets argues that by staying in education students prolong their adolescence, these individuals only entering the 'adult world' once they graduate (2012; Bhatti et al 2012). Meanwhile, individuals not pursuing post-compulsory schooling may not immediately enter a full version of adulthood either. They are staying in the parental home much longer than in the past thereby delaying the point at which they start formally renting or accessing a mortgage. There has been a 25 per cent increase between 1996 and 2013 in the number of 20-34 year olds in the UK living with parents, for example (ONS 2014).

With reported political interest of many young people remaining high and their apparent involvement in political protest events it could still be simplistic to suggest politics lacks

significance for this constituency. Young people demonstrate great concern on political issues affecting them, including education, youth unemployment, and the economy (Furlong and Cartmel 2012). Many are therefore able to (and do) make connections between their everyday realities and the issues discussed in politics, so can appreciate its relevance. Crucially however, as Hay argues, one must always consider the 'demand of potential voters for the political goods which the parties seek to supply them' (2007: 60). As my discussions of context suggest, political interest is not sufficient.

While there appears some crossover in the policy areas of interest to young and old, for example, the economy and welfare (Goerres 2008), views and priorities within these can vary. Young people are also likely to possess higher interest than the wider electorate in HE, environmentalism, social justice, and international development (Henn et al 2002; Henn et al 2005; Henn and Weinstein 2006; White et al 2000; Harris et al 2010). In the 2010 British Election Study 23 per cent of respondents within Generation Y (born 1981-2000) rated the environment within their top three political priorities. Only 9.5 per cent of the Silent Generation, born 1925-1945, did likewise (Furlong and Cartmel 2012). Position in the life-cycle may therefore generate a number of youth-specific concerns. Tying this to electoral context, if older people are more likely to vote and in numerical terms recognised as a far larger constituency than young people – greying majorities (Goerres 2008; Berry 2014a) – parties would do well to concentrate their attentions away from youth concerns (see Downs 1957; Kirchheimer 1966). So, it may not only be a question of perceived relevance of politics but also a consideration of how far the issues most relevant to young people, given their age, are championed by politicians.

Indeed, research finds there is often disparity with the policy areas of most interest to young people neglected within parties' policy programmes or secondary to those prioritised by older voters (Dalton 2006; Sloam 2013: 843; Tonge and Mycock 2010: 188; Marsh et al 2007; Martin 2012b: 125; Henn et al 2005; Henn et al 2002; Sloam 2007: 565; O'Toole et al 2003: 359; Furlong and Cartmel 2012: 17). In an increasingly expensive and sophisticated campaign arena, major parties may try to segment the electorate and focus their energies on those more likely to deliver votes. Some authors have forwarded the UK Liberal Democrats' third-party strategy during the 2000s as evidence of this approach by their consciously differentiating themselves from Labour and Conservatives through championing youth interests, such as opposition to the Iraq War and tuition fees (Davidson 2005; Egan 2005; Russell 2005). If there was an opening

for the party here, the implication is that the two main parties were choosing not to focus on the youth constituency. Parties are not solely vote-seeking and can present policies which might appeal to smaller constituencies through their ideological commitments (Mulé 1997). However, under-representation of young people in the UK's main decision-making political institutions (Whiteley et al 2006) and the declining influence of parties' youth wings on their manifestos (Russell 2005) can exacerbate this issue of perceived under-representation. If I return to rational choice and issue-voting, young people may reasonably feel there are limited benefits to their participating. Unable to find a party with a real chance of electoral success, fielding attractive candidates and a policy programme addressing their concerns, abstention could be judged acceptable (McDonald and Budge 2005: 61; see also Hustinx et al 2012; Dermody et al 2010).

It has already been stated how, as first-time voters, young people also incur greater costs – in becoming informed, making a decision, and voting – because they lack formal election experience. While those at university might be more politically engaged and knowledgeable, and so have lower costs, their experience of elections is still much less than that of older groups. Young people of all backgrounds are also likely to lack partisan-voting habits which can ease or even dictate voting decisions (Goerres 2007; Plutzer 2002; Tilley 2003). Recent statistics show that 53 per cent of 18-24 year olds in Britain consider themselves non-party supporters, compared to just a third (33 per cent) of the general population (Hansard Society 2014: 46). Similarly, in Australia and America, the proportion of young people identifying with a party has been falling, with the gap between young and old growing (Martin 2012b: 73-77). This is important because where partisanship is present it can reduce decision-making costs while also mitigating any disillusionment with parties through a sense of loyalty and personal electoral histories.

Suggestions are that all young people likely face some level of an electoral participation 'disadvantage'. They incur greater costs associated with first-time voter status and can perceive fewer benefits in light of party and parliamentary demographics as well as strategic policy programmes. This notion of disadvantage can already be seen in many policies introduced or proposed to increase youth participation. Citizenship education, for example, in part aims to accelerate the politicisation process of young people during their formative years, aiming to overcome their lack of lived political experience by transferring knowledge about the political process which would otherwise present costs (Keating et al 2010). More recently, there have been calls for compulsory first-time

voting in the UK (Institute of Public Policy Research 2013) and compulsory registration in schools and colleges (Mycock and Tonge 2014). Both are again designed to mitigate the impact of a youth handicap by increasing the costs of non-participation and removing practical barriers. In any consideration of the puzzle, it is important to recognise that younger generations are already assumed to be less participative and possibly more affected by institutional and contextual factors, irrespective of their education.

1.5. Alternative participation

Before I consider a new explanatory approach to the study of turnout, it should be acknowledged that voting is not the only participation option available to individuals in a democracy. There are petitions, strikes, protests, boycotts, contacting, and, more recently, social media campaigns, all designed to raise awareness and put public pressure on political actors. The literature is flooded with different definitions and ideas as to what constitutes political participation and how activities and behaviours should be grouped. Risks of conceptual stretching are associated with a broad concept of civic participation, as championed by authors like Putnam (2000) (see Berger 2009; Ekman and Amnå 2012: 284). Volunteering is frequently found in descriptions of citizenship but cannot always be directly compared with electoral participation. While it could involve volunteering to distribute an organisation's petition which then aims at influencing policy, it could also refer to running a local sports club or supporting individuals with social care needs, neither of which share an aim comparable to that of voting. A clearer conceptual distinction can be made by referring to any political activity occurring outwith elections but sharing similar objectives in being aimed at affecting politics. Brady's definition offers a useful starting point; 'action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes' (1999: 737). While acts may differ here in the specificities of what they involve and where they occur, they aim at achieving similar goals. This definition also links to similar concepts forwarded in Pattie et al's 'macro-politics participation' (2004: 76-8) and Schlozman and colleagues' thoughts on 'political voice' (2012: 10-13), both of which are concerned with activities seeking to influence decisions in the formal political arena. By applying this definitional criteria – action based; ordinary citizens; influencing; and political outcomes – it is possible to test whether the puzzle is unique to voting.

In many respects, similar educational expectations as for voting would exist for these alternative participation acts; there is higher likelihood of engaging in these activities when individuals are highly educated (Pattie et al 2004). Both rational choice and sociological arguments, in their classic applications, would suggest more education makes individuals more likely to participate; costs are reduced and benefits heightened while interest, awareness, and normative pressures are also raised. Institutional conditions may be of less significance, although clearly individuals must act within the law and can make use of e-petitioning services and MP communication channels which operate within the formal political structures. Wider political context will also likely be very important since these activities tend to occur in response to particular concerns. To what extent, therefore, is the paradoxical relationship outlined above observable across political participation more broadly?

There are conflicting suggestions on how alternative participation rates have been changing historically. It is often difficult to find quality survey data tracking these trends over time. Definitions and popular activities for research can be context dependent. It is only more recently that online activism has entered the mainstream so surveys are only now catching up to include this. Equally, electoral turnout has historically dominated discussions and as a consequence, data on alternative participation has not been routinely collected, presenting challenges for data reliability. Secondary survey data has also more often than not been geared towards certain types of activity which are of particular interest to the researcher(s) rather than capturing wide ranges against which different preferences can be mapped. This is especially concerning when studying young people given research has traditionally selected activities without fully appreciating how young people might uniquely engage (O'Toole et al 2003).

In the UK, Whiteley (2012) has nevertheless compared rates for some participation acts between 1984 and 2002 using data from Parry et al's 1992 work 'Political participation and democracy in Britain' (1992) and the 2002 European Social Survey. Only one of the activities has seen an increase during this period: boycotting, rising from 4 per cent to 26 per cent. Contrastingly, on signing petitions there has been a fall from 63 to 40 per cent, contacting politicians from 38 to 18 per cent, and protests 6 to 4 per cent (2012: 39). These are, however, based on only two snapshots of participation rates. Globally, data from the World Values Survey has seen rising levels of participation in signing petitions, demonstrating, boycotting, and, to a lesser degree, occupying buildings

between 1974 and 1999. All are at least two times more likely at the end of the period (Stolle et al 2005: 247-8). There are further suggestions that where alternative participation activities are growing in popularity, it is among younger generations (Norris 2002; Dalton 2008a; Martin 2012a). Even if it is unclear whether these activities are becoming more popular from one generation to the next, we can suggest there are particular life-stages in which individual's approach to participation and their preferences within this show strong support for alternative political activity. If this is the case, however, questions emerge over why voting patterns mirror alternative participation in some groups yet in others do so only to a limited extent, if at all.

Information about individuals' alternative participation may also provide insight into some of the mechanisms directing young people's voting behaviour. It can suggest how they approach politics, the level of disengagement (is it purely electoral?), and the ways in which different facets of educational (and life) experiences can affect young people's electoral decision-making. As I return to in Chapter 2, voting is arguably understood best by positioning it within wider repertoires of participation.

1.6. Studying the youth participation puzzle

From looking at a range of theories and approaches, Brody's participation puzzle becomes more apparent. There are reasons for believing education will engender a more participative electorate, from the consideration of rational choice calculations and sociological influences and, within this, social network interactions. Young people today should feel equipped to participate and in many instances encouraged by their more educationally advanced environment. Their persistently low and falling turnout is consequently much harder to explain. Certainly, there appears to be a youth disadvantage but questions are raised as to why rising education levels are unable to counter the turnout-depressing impact of age-effects. It has also been suggested that while electoral context can be significant and must be appreciated in any single election study, it is unclear why the turnout fluctuations this can cause remain part of a more general downward trend. It is not simply a one-off phenomenon. Institutional arrangements are also important but as these trends are occurring across many Western democracies, irrespective of their party systems and electoral rules, it further indicates a wider phenomenon.

Thelen argues that when studying human behaviour, principally in her considering institutionalist approaches, researchers should adopt 'creative combinations' (1999: 380). Theories are most convincing when brought together in appreciation of both the nature of the specific phenomenon under investigation and how different processes and factors might interact. Institutions and context cannot be ignored. However, indications here are that to explain youth turnout we must look towards questioning individual and socio-structural theories. As ideal types, a rational choice approach, which allows limited room for social influences, and sociological approach, which allows limited room for individual capacity, are too simplistic. The former leaves questions on how individuals develop the preferences and approaches to politics against which decisions are ultimately made. The latter fails to elaborate on how individuals decide how to act when under the influence of various social forces, not all of which will be mutually reinforcing. As is the case of the highly educated yet young student population, these social forces can be contradictory. An explanatory framework should instead look to accommodate individual choice and social influence (Cohen et al 2001). When thinking about individuals engaged in internal cognitive decision-making we must question rational choice theory's insistence that this is an entirely independent, objective, and personal process. Instead, social and environmental factors will further shape the way in which each individual evaluates what is rational. It is with this foundation that my explanatory framework is now developed in Chapter 2.

2. Alternative education effects: the emerging disaffected citizenry

The principal question leading this research stems from Brody's 1978 observation of an apparent paradox in participation trends (1978). Electoral participation in Western democracies – as measured by voter turnout – is falling. This is despite increasing levels of average education following extensions to compulsory schooling and higher education (HE) expansion, and education at an individual level being consistently associated with higher turnout potential. Within this, young people demonstrate the lowest turnout of any group while they are arguably the most educated generation yet. If held to be true, the conventional educational effects discussed in the preceding chapter would be expected to make them the most participative and counter their youth disadvantage. My research therefore focuses on why education has failed to boost youth turnout rates in the anticipated way; why is the comparatively higher average level of education enjoyed by young people today not associated with a higher level of turnout? This chapter looks in more detail at how young people's educational experiences – operating through both individual and social mechanisms – affect individuals' decision-making as they approach elections and choose whether or not to vote. It presents the reasoning behind a new conceptual and theoretical framework – the disaffected citizenry – centred on the formation and role of political participation attitudes in encouraging abstention. This has been designed to combine elements of existing approaches alongside new thinking, and will be examined and tested throughout the remainder of the thesis.

2.1. The *alternative* education approaches

To answer this central question, we can initially consider those theories and studies which are already starting to question traditional education-participation assumptions. These consider alternative mechanisms through which education can affect political participation, not only helping us to move away from the conventional civic education hypothesis but also to suggest that in certain instances higher levels of education, at an individual and environmental level, might actually *negatively* impact turnout potential. Within my model development, I draw particular inspiration from two leading schools of thought which might be considered especially relevant for understanding education's influence within a youth constituency.

The first concerns ideas of changing participation preferences, a theory that as society has modernised and become more educated individuals have replaced purely electoral repertoires of activity with the adoption of more alternative forms of political action (Norris 2003; Dalton 2006, 2008a, 2008b; Inglehart 1990) – *repertoire replacement*. The second argues that education performs a social sorting role, acting as a proxy for varying levels of access to socially and politically important networks and associated mobilisation. As education expands, individuals for whom the highest levels of education are unobtainable are increasingly excluded from politicised networks and so encounter a decreasing amount of electoral encouragement (Nie et al 1996; Campbell 2009; Rolfe 2012) – *the sorting model*.

The former therefore emphasises a potential negative influence of *students and/or highly educated young people* on overall youth turnout rates from their adopting alternative participation preferences. The latter stresses a negative impact associated with *non-students' and less well educated young people* following their withdrawal from politics in the face of declining socio-political position. Both arguments rethink the causal mechanisms through which education affects voting behaviour. Read together, they suggest a variety of complex processes operate which can promote but also discourage positive turnout decisions. I therefore argue that it is necessary to depart from a unidimensional model which attributes a single causal relationship to education. Instead, I seek to combine and develop these two potentially complementary but currently distinct within the literature, and separately studied, contributions to build a more holistic understanding of the varied ways in which education and turnout relate to each other. Explanations are forwarded for how young people of varying educational experiences make us question conventional expectations and contribute to consistently low youth turnout.

Inspired by the existing theories, I subsequently present a framework which explains the youth participation puzzle as resulting from an ever emergent *non-voting disaffected citizenry*. Doing so, I draw further inspiration from a third body of work encapsulated by Norris's critical citizens (1999, 2011). For Norris, these are individuals 'who adhere strongly to democratic values but who find the existing structures of representative government [...] to be wanting' (1999: 3) and as such become wary of participating in formal electoral and party politics. In a departure from Norris, however, who focuses almost exclusively on a single critical citizen – one who is typically highly educated and

in later work demonstrates repertoire replacement (2003) – the ‘disaffected citizenry’ model I forward argues there are multiple non-voter types important for understanding electoral participation. This is because any disjuncture between ideals and reality should be viewed as being composed and experienced differently by young people as their own political attitudes develop. ‘Educational experiences’ – at a purely individual as well as environmental level – comprise many components so we should expect groups to be qualitatively distinct in how and why they become critical, how this then affects their attitudes towards political participation, and their eventual turnout behaviours.

By applying the ideas found within the repertoire replacement and sorting model hypotheses, I focus on the emergence of two dimensions of disaffection, the first demonstrated by two dissatisfied-disaffection types - ‘engaged activists’ and ‘frustrated electors’ – and a second characterised by alienated-disaffection, found among a ‘marginalised citizens’. All three types are thought to hold negative views of formal politics, so are less guaranteed in their turnout. Yet, the mechanisms through which education shapes their respective opinions are specific to each group, resulting in differences in the compositional nature of their disaffection and the behavioural manifestations of this, whether they withdraw completely from politics or pursue an alternative participation repertoire, for example. Additional age-based factors can compound these processes. Hence each new generation, more educated than the last, sees the effects of amplified. Our youngest generations should therefore display the highest prevalence of these disaffected types. In turn, this establishes a less electorally participative cohort, even as they age, so contributing to aggregate over-time trends; an increasing number of young people are not developing the habit of voting during their formative political years. Alongside this, I propose the existence of a ‘mobilised voter’ responsible for instances of continued turnout, where network and partisan recruitment can reduce disaffection and its expected impact. To develop the framework, in this chapter I first critique the two theories listed above and suggest how these can already be applied to understanding the youth participation puzzle. I then go on to suggest how these can be used within a multifaceted disaffected citizenry framework to identify educational patterns of and explanations for non-voting behaviour among our youngest electors.

2.2. Repertoire replacement: an *anti*-elections participation trade-off?

It is increasingly common for scholars to move attention to studying alternative influencing activities alongside more traditional, elections-based understandings of participation. Thoughts of repertoire expansion and evolution present a case that there has been a generational shift in behavioural preferences. Individuals have moved from participating in one-off electoral events to favouring on-going, direct, and issue-specific activities, such as protests, petitions, and boycotts (Norris 2002, 2003; Inglehart 1977, 1990; see Stolle and Hooghe 2005: 159-64; Pattie et al 2004; Dalton 2011). If issues arise and individuals feel strongly about them, they will not necessarily prioritise voting as the means of affecting change. It is an option but one considered to be of equal (or sometimes lesser) worth and effectiveness. As research in the UK by the Hansard Society suggests, the willingness to engage through some of these methods can be higher than electoral participation or at least comparable. For example, 51 and 43 per cent of respondents in 2013 were prepared to contact politicians or sign/organise a petition, respectively, similar to the 46 per cent willingness to vote (2014: 47).

For many, educational expansion is a key driver of this process with there being moves towards a more 'sophisticated electorate' (Inglehart 1977: 15-6). New and younger generations develop ideas, values, and skills through their formal and informal educational experiences, often at an HE-level, which promote non-electoral participation (Dalton 2006, 2008a, 2008b; Martin 2012a, 2012b; Inglehart 1977, 1990; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Education is an important facilitator of an alternative approach to politics, some going as far to call it a pre-requisite (Inglehart 1977: 321; 1990: 384; Martin 2012b: 96; Dalton et al 2003: 16-7). Without understanding the methods through which politics can be influenced, the actors to which actions should be targeted, where existing campaigns can be joined, or how to coordinate group activities (political or otherwise), it may be difficult to pursue such methods. Importantly, a feeling of political competence can see individuals become more demanding in their desire for direct involvement. They will seek out opportunities which allow them to realise their potential for action, preferring not to rely solely on elected representatives.

HE can also support an intellectual culture in which challenging established conventions, thinking creatively, and questioning existing social structures and procedures is

supported and rewarded (Sampson 1967: 11; Kaufmann and Feldman 2004: 471-3). Inglehart claims the critical mass within a university can even legitimise deviant choices by broadening horizons (1977: 83). Irrespective of personal capacity and capability, educational experiences can encourage individuals to think differently about how politics should be done. For instance, Webb observes a significant positive relationship in Britain between education and 'sunshine' democratic values, those which include high expectations of how democracy should operate, such as demands for more debate and public say (2013: 756-9). It can also promote a more issue-based approach to politics. Emphasis is increasingly shifting from education's traditional role – focused on developing citizens who practice a deferential form of respect for authority (Guyton 1988: 23; McKenzie 2001) – to one in which self-actualising values are promoted (see Maslow 1943). Society's increased promotion of individualism has included an emancipatory pedagogical turn in which the exercise of agency and pursuit of personal fulfilment is strongly encouraged (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Shor 1992; Carr 1995).

Dalton consequently argues that educational expansion has heralded a move from 'citizen duty' to 'engaged citizenship' in politics (2008a, 2008b; see also Martin 2012a, Martin 2012b). The latter is characterised by: scepticism towards formal politics, greater demand for and pursuit of direct democracy, and heightened self-perception of political efficacy. Educated individuals are considered to be less accepting of and more discouraged by traditional, bureaucratic, formal, and hierarchical opportunities. These developments impact on turnout because, according to Franklin, individuals look to 'bypass electoral routes', seeking influence over policy through alternative activities where and when electoral channels seem unresponsive (2002: 165; Dalton 2006, 2008; Dalton et al 2003; Norris 2003; Martin 2012a, 2012b). As shown, consensus is lacking on whether these activities are really becoming more common (see Chapter 1), often due to difficulties in finding comparable over-time data. There are examples, however, of these activities becoming more popular. American research finds the percentage of individuals supporting the use of alternative participation to be growing which, in light of falling turnout, suggests a shifting in the balance between electoral and alternative participation preferences (Dalton 2011: 2-3). Crucially, it not only implies expanding repertoires are being embraced but that there might be rejection of voting as the primary way of exerting influence. Stolle and Hooghe describe this as 'emerging participation styles and methods [...] rapidly replacing the old ones' (2005: 159). According to this

view, turnout is at risk of falling if individuals become more educated, critical and demanding.

Evidently, however, not all scholars are convinced education has led to wholesale replacement of electoral participation. Parry and colleagues' 1992 work finds voting remains the principal form of participation for most individuals. Approximately half their study respondents were effectively silent outwith elections, despite possibilities to pursue other activities with the project considering a total of 23 political acts (1992: 47-50).⁸ Similarly, Hooghe and Marien's more recent research in Belgium finds that notwithstanding rising alternative participation rates, most people still perceive voting as the most effective form of participation (2014). Others find that while alternative participation has risen, this is observed almost exclusively among those individuals who also possess a high likelihood of voting. This implies changing preferences have not been to the detriment of voting. Instead, a positive correlation is often observed between the two activity realms with individuals doing one often found to be doing the other (Blais and Loewen 2011; Kaase and Marsh 1979; Marien et al 2010; Martin 2012b). Hustinx and colleagues subsequently claim politicised and educated individuals are better understood as 'civic omnivores' with blended civic taste patterns (2012). They are creative and resourceful in their combining different forms of participation and choosing those which are most applicable, accessible, and appropriate for affecting the issue of interest within a given context and at a particular time. Suggestions from these studies are that while interesting, growing levels of alternative participation cannot be unquestioningly equated with low levels of electoral participation. The two often co-exist in a complementary, not competitive way with active political participants extending rather than replacing their activity repertoires.

Noticeably, studies above which refute possibilities of repertoire replacement typically concentrate on the electorate as a whole, observing general patterns rather than disaggregating further among electors. Significantly for this research, however, the groups found most likely to pursue newer, non-electoral influencing activities are not only the highly educated but also the young (Norris 2003; Marien et al 2010; Martin 2012a, 2012b; Sloam 2013; Quintelier 2007; Oser and Hooghe 2013; Stockemer 2014:

⁸ Grouped through factor analysis into voting, party campaigning, collective action, contacting, direct action, and political violence activities.

207-8). The education-participation relationship is traditionally presented as positive for both types of participation; the highly educated are more likely to be politically engaged, so also active across all political opportunities available to them. However, despite studies consistently finding an equally positive association between age and *electoral* participation, it is generally assumed to be negative for *alternative* participation (Norris 2003; Martin 2012a, 2012b; Quintelier 2007; Dalton 2008b). Such ideas advance the possibility that a relationship between alternative and electoral participation – and the likelihood of a trade-off in which one is favoured at the expense of the other – varies across demographic groups. Consensus is again lacking since young people are not always found to be significantly more politically active outwith elections. Young people in Europe,⁹ while outperforming general populations on demonstrating (1.8 times more likely) and wearing campaign badges (1.5), are less likely to have joined a boycott or engaged in contacting behaviours with ratios of 0.8 and 0.6, respectively (Sloam 2013: 845-7). Nevertheless, students specifically, falling in both camps by being highly educated *and* typically young, could be considered especially susceptible to demonstrating repertoire replacement.

As Hustinx et al.'s study of Belgian and Dutch university students goes on to find, students were most likely to present as monitorial citizens, politically active but prioritising non-electoral activities and only when issues concerning them would arise. Contrastingly, the civic omnivores upon which their initial hypotheses rested, were found to represent only a small proportion of students in their sample (2012; see also Oser and Hooghe 2013; Schudson 1998). Their research suggests that despite blended participation preferences appearing within many electoral groups, alternative participation could still be favoured above voting among this student subset of young people. The growing number of students in the electorate may therefore mean a growing proportion of alternative, non-electoral participators. Even if individual-level analysis of education effects suggests this group will vote more as they age, the presence of an anti-elections approach during their formative political years may be relevant in explaining gradual generational change and the growing incidence of abstention. In their youth a rising number are not developing habitual voting practices.

⁹ Research using the European Social Survey, Waves 1-4.

2.2.1. Participation opportunities

Views surrounding an anti-elections participation trade-off among young on-course students can be elaborated with reference to participation opportunities. Brady et al state that 'by showing how resources differentially available [...] affect various modes of political activity, we [can] state not why some individuals are more active [...] but also why certain kinds of people engage in particular kinds of activity' (1995: 271). Luskin describes a similar condition in which participation is shaped by opportunity, ability, and motivation (1990; Verba et al 1995; Platt 2008; Schlozman et al 2012). In addition to an attitudinal preference for alternative participation, students arguably possess some of the greatest resources for pursuing associated alternative activities. An overreliance on elections may therefore fall.

The presence of political activity on campuses provides students with easily accessible routes into politics. Much of the organisation is done already with networks of politically engaged individuals in place to coordinate action, mobilise, and recruit otherwise apolitical or non-participatory individuals (Sampson 1967; Crossley 2008; Crossley and Ibrahim 2012; Van Dyke 1998; Stockemer 2012; Cone 2001). With student union politics often not being overtly party political, it can politicise anyone ordinarily disillusioned by politics while further detracting from Westminster elections. The campus becomes its own civic space. For example, student occupations, despite often being directed at government (Ibrahim 2011; Rheingans and Hollands 2013), are also utilised to pursue campus causes. In 2013, the students of Warwick University occupied university buildings to protest a pay increase for the vice-chancellor, for example (Feldman 2013). Thus students can satisfy their appetite for exercising agency over decisions affecting them without having to engage in more formal politics which can appear to lack relevance or be unresponsive.

Moreover, universities and student unions provide practical support in the form of meeting rooms, computers, noticeboards, and funding (Crossley 2008; Ibrahim 2011; Schulman and Levine 2012). These help students overcome any lack of personal or financial resources which would otherwise act as obstacles to participation. Meanwhile, they help activity organisers, such as activist members of campaigning societies, reach out to a wider audience, attract participants, and find like-minded individuals with whom to coordinate action. These resources are typically unavailable or less easily

accessible to many other groups (old and young) and as such non-students may be more reliant on elections to voice their opinions. As Wolfinger and Rosenstone state, even if participation preferences persist upon leaving university, older individuals might find their graduation deprives them of the politically supportive environment a university provides (1980: 57). This might be exacerbated by the falling role of political associations, such as trade unions, which may have historically played a similar role (Flanagan et al 2012). Again, if students are initially politicised in this way, a legacy of electoral reluctance is likely to persist for some individuals.

There are also expressive benefits available from alternative participation. Students often become involved in protest activities for sociable aspects prior to developing a strong interest in politics (Crossley 2008; Möller et al 2009). Experiences of leaving home and entering university – ‘transition points’ in which old social ties are broken and new ones need to be formed – can make students especially susceptible to these influences (Munson 2010: 774). Older individuals, whose social networks are typically already developed and stable with lives more structured by family and employment, may simply perceive less need to use political participation as a social tool. The same could be suggested for young people who do not pursue HE and stay living with or close to parents. Arguably, they do not experience a transition point on the same scale. Nevertheless, variation across students in the likelihood of living at home suggests these circumstances are more likely to be encountered by particular subsets of the student population. Only 14 per cent of students accepted into UK universities with high UCAS tariff scores (i.e. with higher grades, so more likely attending high-ranked institutions) live at home versus 40 per cent of those with low tariffs (Department for Business, Skills and Innovation 2014: 63). We could therefore expect alternative participation opportunities and incentives to vary across institutional settings. The higher prevalence of voting students at Russell Group¹⁰ universities (Whiteley 2012), where entry tariffs are typically higher than at other universities (Russell Group 2014: 13), however, brings into question whether leaving home necessarily means less electoral mobilisation. We might nonetheless still expect higher rates of alternative participation.

¹⁰ 24 leading UK universities, all of which feature in the world’s top 150 universities (Russell Group 2014: 4).

Life-cycle theories would posit a further role connected to biographical availability. By possessing fewer responsibilities and more flexible lifestyles, young people often have greater opportunities for alternative participation where activities are frequently time consuming and group-based (McAdam 1986: 70). Travelling to another city to attend a demonstration is arguably easier for someone with no dependents to consider and/or contractual work commitments which are difficult to reschedule. Similarly, volunteering within a campaign to distribute literature door-to-door is both labour- and time-intensive. Without some personal freedom, individuals are severely limited in the activities they can pursue (Platt 2008: 393-5; Verba et al 1995). Given many students' flexible timetables, alongside the institutional-level resources above, they arguably possess some of the greatest opportunities for action, and more so than many other young people. Non-HE young people are perhaps more likely to be in employment with shorter vacation periods, both of which impose limits on availability. As Crossley concludes, students are almost unique in being 'structurally "freed up" for activism' (2008: 32; Olcese et al 2014).

Simultaneously, they may believe opportunities for electoral participation, particularly in general elections, to be more limited. Students are typically only at university for three-to-four years which affords them only a short time within which to force change on any issues of concern. Hence, there is a difference in the time perspectives between students and many other electors (Sampson 1967: 17). While waiting for an election to influence policy may suit voters with a longer-term perspective, for students it can be too infrequent an opportunity. More immediate, direct action is preferable for targeting their shorter-term priorities. Equally, the timing of elections in some countries may be awkward for students. In the UK, elections typically occur in May which can coincide with exam periods and moving dates at the end of the academic year. Non-political, short-term priorities take over and further practical issues arise regarding registration. Their alternative participation opportunities are relatively 'open' while their electoral opportunities are, to a greater degree, 'closed'.

The combined force of youth, HE experience, and student status is therefore expected to encourage students to participate through alternative political activities as well as their being some of the most likely electors to do so. If one adopts a logic that, 'a person who performs one act from a particular cluster [of activities] is likely to perform other acts from the same cluster, but not necessarily activities from another' (Dalton 2006: 36)

students' political participation could, in part, be studied as a participation trade-off (at least during the short-term university career). According to this repertoire replacement interpretation, students are contributing to falling youth turnout and the widening gap between young and old voters by their choosing to reject electoral participation despite being politically engaged; youth turnout has not declined in spite of HE expansion but because of it. University experiences are inspiring an increasing number of young people, given increasing student numbers, to replace strict elections-based conceptions of participation with more active and direct participation repertoires. Even if turnout likelihood increases with age, particularly among graduates, if more young people are socialised and politicised in this way, a likely legacy will be this group increasingly contributing to overall patterns of turnout decline.

2.3. The sorting model: social positioning and social networks

In contrast to additive effects theories – where any rise in society's average education is reflected in a rise in democratic values (Helliwell and Putnam 2007) – a number of authors including and inspired by Nie et al's sorting model suggest a more educated electorate negatively impacts on individual turnout (1996; Campbell 2009; Persson 2011, 2013; Tenn 2005). Each shows how the individual-level effect of education is conditional on the level of education in the environment, a rise in aggregate education acting to mitigate or even reverse any positive individual effects. It does so by affecting notions of relative education and, crucially, the social network centrality this affords different groups (Nie et al 1996).

Individuals at the centre of the most politically important networks are believed to be positioned here largely due to their education. With more education they gain status, come to occupy professional positions, and make contacts with influential individuals, particularly those who direct public policy, disseminate information, and set agendas (ibid: 44). This might include the media and members of professional organisations. As introduced in Chapter 1, networks such as these can determine the likelihood of being subject to direct recruitment by others. Those with greater social network centrality are placed within groups where they are more likely to be invited to participate politically. The individuals they interact with, being positioned closer to decision makers and holding a significant stake in society, have the incentive to encourage participation. This is important because as Verba and colleagues explain, being asked to participate can be

key (1995; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). Being both direct and targeted, such a 'push factor' can be so strong that it overcomes other obstacles or misgivings standing in the way of turning out (Condon and Holleque 2013; Armingeon and Schädel 2015).

Moreover, positioning within important and central networks, those assumed to be more politicised, generates less overt yet still powerful normative forces encouraging electors to vote. Individuals often respond to political cues and adhere to the expected behaviours within their immediate networks (Campbell 2013; Pattie and Johnston 2000; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2012; Cutts and Fieldhouse 2009). The reputational cost of not voting, for example, could be higher for people who have strong political connections than among those for whom voting and civic engagement are not widely practiced in their immediate networks (Franklin 2004: 51; Blais 2000; Campbell 2013; Gerber et al 2008; McClurg 2003). Being in an environment in which politics is discussed and peers are politically active can also have informational spill-over effects. It generates greater awareness of politics and the election itself, making it more difficult to ignore calls to participate. Believing one's interests to be at stake – encouraged by the attitudes and interest of those around you – can see individuals pay closer attention to campaigns and so also raise their interest level (1996: 45-6; Campbell 2009: 773-4; see also Campbell 2013; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 18; Pattie et al 2004: 93; Van der Werfhorst 2007: 16; Rolfe 2012). For all these reasons, voting becomes increasingly appealing.

These socially important positions are in limited supply, however. There is a positive association with education yet these positions do not increase in number as education expands. Social hierarchy remains. Since not everyone can be 'above average' there is arguably less room in this competitive world of HE expansion for non-HE individuals to enjoy access to these networks, particularly when their own education, by relative standards, is falling in value (Campbell 2009; Nie et al 1996; Persson 2011). In previous generations, staying in school beyond the age of 14-16 years may have been sufficient to ensure an individual felt able and inclined to participate in society, and by association politics. Now, however, with increasing entry into HE (Schofer and Meyer 2005), non-HE qualifications risk becoming less revered. There is educational inflation; as 'average levels of education in the population have risen, each individual has needed ever more education to be positioned at the top of the class hierarchy' (Campbell 2009: 772; Tenn 2005; Nie et al 1996; Furlong and Cartmel 2007). If applied to voting, turnout may fail to rise because an educationally-determined hierarchy is entrenched. As Crewe explains in

his analysis of turnout at the 2001 UK general election, '[t]he socially excluded felt politically excluded and so excluded themselves from the electoral process' (2002: 224).

Consideration of these mechanisms has typically focused on the process of sorting and the resultant contacts and connections individuals make upon leaving education and entering professional occupations (Nie et al 1996; Persson 2014). As authors in the field recognise, this is not necessarily appropriate for young people who, still often in education, are yet to be formally sorted (Nie et al 1996; Tenn 2005; Campbell 2009; Persson 2011). Their identities and careers are still being formed. However, given young people's lack of electoral habits and political inexperience arguably they could be more susceptible to processes connected to these relative education effects. Different social networks and levels of status are also often already found to operate within and across educational settings in ways which might influence political mobilisation (Bennett 1991; Fieldhouse and Cutts 2012; Henn and Foard 2014; Munson 2010; see Brennan and Osborne 2008). Young people in HE will not need to have graduated to feel or experience these. Similarly, non-HE young people will likely already be experiencing a lower level of status given negative views attached to not pursuing post-compulsory schooling. For instance, research by the Edge Foundation with UK employers found only 41 per cent would *disagree* that vocational qualifications '...are not as valuable as academic qualifications at preparing people for the workplace' (2013: 2), implying young people outwith universities are not always considered equal. Various studies also show how being outside employment and education in youth can lead to (feelings of) social exclusion and isolation which may continue into adulthood (Thompson et al 2014; Henn et al 2007: 467; Henn and Foard 2014: 11; Diemer and Li 2011: 1815-7; Homes and Manning 2013; Furlong and Cartmel 2007).

Student-led voter registration drives on university campuses offer a good example relevant to the youth population and support my contention that these effects operate while education is still being completed. They are a direct attempt to target students and boost their participation (Ulbig and Waggener 2011). If parties are strategic with resources and outreach efforts, non-students can also be neglected in campaign canvassing. They are a marginalised group assumed less likely to vote than their contemporaries in HE. From a practical perspective, they are also simply less easily targeted, being more widely dispersed, and so become costly to mobilise (Tenn 2005). With the decline of other traditional mobilising forces, for instance trade unions and even

the family, an 'institutional lacuna' for non-HE young people becomes more apparent (Flanagan et al 2012; Gallego 2009; Wray-Lake and Hart 2012; Gray and Caul 2000; Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Armingeon and Schädel 2015). For students, contrastingly, even just 'visual inspection' of other students' political behaviour on their campus can transmit political knowledge, generating interest and awareness (Kenny 1992: 260; Shulman and Levine 2012). Thus, while students are still in the process of becoming highly educated and formally 'sorted', if one is to talk of social networks and political cues it cannot be ignored that universities themselves are environments able to transmit socio-political norms.

In this scenario, we would expect youth turnout decline to be being driven by the behaviours of those young people who remain outwith universities and who are, in effect, 'left behind'. Due to ever falling social standing, as determined by their educational background relative to that of HE students, they will almost always be less participative than their HE peers. They lack access to key mobilising networks, those which will recruit individuals into electoral participation and indirectly, generate a normative pressure to turn out. Any rise in aggregate education will consequently struggle to engender higher than average turnout. Moreover, as HE expands, increasing stigma can mean these young people will see their status and position fall even further to exacerbate the issue (see Whiteley 2012: 49). The nature of the hierarchy and gaps between social strata can change. A potential unintentional side-effect of educational expansion, therefore, is the sustaining and widening of educational inequalities in electoral participation (see Marien et al 2010: 204-5; Sloam 2013; Henn and Foard 2014). This exclusion can then linger into older age groups as existing sorting model studies would suggest.

2.4. Re-thinking critical citizens: education, attitudes, and a disaffected citizenry

The two models presented above suggest students and non-students, through their respective educational experiences, could both be responsible for young people's lower than average turnout. One of the major contributions this thesis makes is to combine and develop these ideas within a multi-dimensional model, where elements of both operate in tandem alongside some more classic civic education assumptions to make the participation puzzle far less puzzling. Inspired by the funnel of causality (Campbell et al 1960) detailed previously, I focus on how the educational experiences of young people

today, alongside age itself, impact on their attitudes towards politics and political participation and how these go on to determine their turnout choice. This was not overlooked by Brody in his own original examination of the puzzle, where he began to consider motivations behind political participation, including efficacy. However, questions on how these attitudes develop and then operate to affect turnout remained, while he concluded that ‘we even lack a shared framework in which to place the pieces when we have them’ (1978: 324). This thesis presents a possible framework.

Norris argues that educational expansion has promoted a critical citizen across Western polities. They are individuals committed to democratic ideals and possessing high expectations but for whom their demands and expectations of politics are not being met (1999, 2011). Their continued participation in the formal processes is deemed increasingly unappealing with criticism against institutions and their actors rising. This theory provides a useful foundation for considering how educational characteristics can shape attitudes towards participation and, I would argue, subsequently affect electoral choices. However, inspired by Webb’s different types of disaffected democrats in the British electorate (2013; see also Collingwood 2012; Shryane et al 2006) and work on participation and citizenship typologies (Hustinx et al 2012; Merton 1957; Ekman and Amnå 2012; Hooghe et al 2014), my thesis posits that rather than one type of critical citizen there are several, and these emerge within two overarching manifestations of disaffection. Changes in the nature of education have meant greater promotion of self-expression, individualism, and empowerment (Arthur et al 2008; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Dalton 2008a; Blais and Rubenson 2013; Putnam 2000). Consequently, young people of any educational status could be thought to possess dormant potential for some form of ‘critical citizenship’. However, this is likely to vary according to their individual circumstances which generate different attitudes and, ultimately, is reflected in persistent turnout inequality across educational groups.

By drawing on the theories and evidence above I therefore present a model framed around an emergent *non-voting disaffected citizenry*. This framework uses ideas about education’s impact on both political participation attitudes *and* behaviours to explain youth abstention. Individuals here are united in their holding negative assessments of the political system and so demonstrate low external efficacy, political trust, and perceptions of political responsiveness. However, my model builds in an appreciation of variation in the ways in which these views interact with individuals’ expectations and

preferences, as influenced by their educational experiences and personal characteristics. I argue there are two principal dimensions of disaffection contributing to continued low youth turnout. These result from different educational mechanisms and scenarios. Further variations in these lead to three proposed distinct non-voter types.

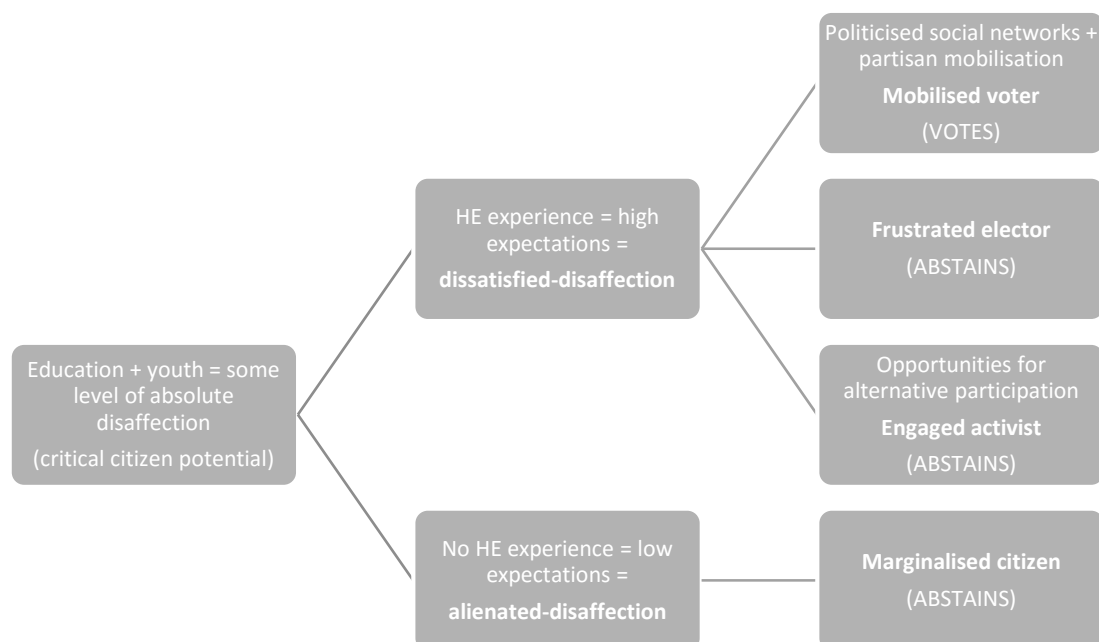


Figure 2.1: 'Decision tree' of young people's voting behaviour applying the disaffected citizenry framework

As summarised in Figure 2.1 – and explained below – there is a dissatisfied-disaffection in which negative perceptions exist alongside high levels of internal efficacy and strong democratic ideals. There is frustration with a political world failing to deliver. Within this, two types of non-voter can be identified. The first, a 'frustrated elector', is expected among young people with HE experience who adopt attitudes associated with repertoire replacement theory but not the behaviours. Instead they simply demonstrate a more selective, issue-based, and consumer approach to electoral participation. The second, also predominantly found among HE individuals, is the 'engaged activist'. They are much more akin to a pure repertoire replacement model in their actively favouring alternative forms of political activity and rejecting voting. The second dimension is conversely alienated-disaffection. I associate this with a 'marginalised citizen', predominantly non-HE in experience. Individuals here feel increasingly powerless and socially excluded regardless of their absolute education levels because their relative status is low and

falling. They develop low internal efficacy and are more indifferent to upholding democratic ideals. This prompts them to withdraw from politics, their disaffection perhaps being more entrenched.

2.4.1. An attitudes-based framework

The attitudes I use to develop my disaffection concept relate to the institutions, actors, and principles operating within a political system as well as individuals' opinions about themselves on the role they believe they can and should play in politics. In each dimension, different combinations of views exist to generate a hesitant and even reluctant approach towards electoral participation. It is my intention for the empirical analysis in the thesis itself to uncover the exact nature and composition of each collection of attitudes, how they come about for certain groups, and what their comparative influence on voting behaviour is. Nevertheless, it is important to present here the components I expect to be involved in this process. My framework centres on four interrelated attitudinal areas: democratic ideals and expectations, internal political efficacy, external political efficacy, and an indicator of trust and perceived responsiveness. These are selected to build on Norris' own original approach to the critical citizen in which political support is viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon (1999, 2011; Almond and Verba 1963; Easton 1965; Seyd 2016; Stoker and Evans 2014). Feelings both towards the political system, such as judgements on its performance, and beliefs about how it should perform need to be considered when establishing an individual's overall approach to political participation. Equally, how they view themselves as a political actor. Where my thesis differs is in developing a framework in which varied combinations of these attitudes exist across the youth electorate rather than there being a single critical citizen. As stated, these ideas are developed throughout the analysis but as a foundation, I offer some introduction.

Democratic ideals and expectations: These link to individuals' views on the importance of 'democracy', how it should be practiced, and the roles they and others should play in it. Individuals hold a generalised view on the principles by which a political system should be subject, even if they themselves would not explicitly refer to these as 'democratic ideals'. Evidently, democracy is a contested concept and these views will inevitably vary. They are significant, however, in setting the parameters against which democratic practice is judged (Norris 2011). For instance, a belief that individual citizens are only

permitted a minor role in politics might not be considered a negative observation if the individual also believes, like Schumpeter (1954), citizens' role should be limited with power almost always concentrated among officials. Contrastingly, if individuals support a more participatory form of democracy, a lack of citizen involvement could generate significant criticism. For turnout, there is also the relative importance attached to elections themselves versus more direct forms of participation.

Internal political efficacy: This can relate to individuals' views on how personally influential and capable they feel they can be in politics, if given an opportunity. It therefore links to their political knowledge and skills, both perceived and real (Clarke and Acock 1989; Pollock 1983), and their general sense of confidence in exercising agency (Condon and Holleque 2013: 168). This is important because it is assumed individuals who feel more capable are inclined to participate in politics but are also more demanding of assuming a direct role (Dalton 2008a). In some instances, high internal efficacy may correspond with high turnout, individuals believing they should and can be playing a role in politics. However, in other cases, if politics is viewed as closed and unresponsive, a democratic deficit effect might take hold in which individuals want to play a role but are frustrated that they cannot to the desired extent. A low sense of internal political efficacy, contrastingly, is always likely to limit turnout potential since individuals will lack confidence in their ability to participate, electorally or otherwise.

External political efficacy: In contrast to internal political efficacy, external political efficacy covers individuals' views on how open they believe the political system is to their influence and whether or not they have a voice within it. Often this is referred to in the same terms as political responsiveness (Clarke and Acock 1989: 552) but there is increasingly a feeling that the two concepts, while related, are distinct (Esaiasson et al 2015). The external efficacy concept referred to here is concerned largely with processes, systems, and the powers individuals are able to exercise within these. If viewed as inaccessible, individuals may be disinclined to participate, irrespective of their own internal efficacy; low internal efficacy will be reinforced while high internal efficacy is frustrated. If processes are viewed as 'open', the negative impact of low internal efficacy may, conversely, be minimised. The participation demands associated with high internal efficacy can also find a space in which to be exercised.

Political responsiveness and trust: Responsiveness here relates to individuals' views on whether political actors and institutions respond, reflect, and represent electors' interests. As Hay suggests, voters want to see the supply-side of politics meeting their policy demands (2007). Not only concerned with processes, electors also assess whether their issue concerns and interests are championed by parties, whether political actors appear to follow public opinion, and whether institutions adapt to changing electorate preferences. Where they appear unresponsive, there is less motivation to turn out. This may be particularly context-dependent, for example based on a specific election and its campaigns. It could even overrule any sense of external efficacy. Someone may have faith in the system as a whole but less so in its current incarnation. Significantly, political trust is closely linked to this notion of political responsiveness. It reflects individuals' views on how much faith they feel they can have in political actors and institutions to act in electors' best interests, behave responsibly, and follow through on electoral promises (Craig et al 1990; Dalton 2005). For example, there may first be an interest in whether politicians promote policies which the elector themselves prioritises (responsiveness) and then whether they can be confident in these being followed through in an acceptable way (trust). An initial sense of perceived responsiveness may suffer if an individual is also highly cynical about the sincerity of any manifesto promise.

2.5. Frustrated elector or engaged activist?

In discussions of repertoire replacement, educational experiences – especially those within a university – can inspire individuals to think more critically about the world around them and challenge convention. Extended to politics, they have an increased probability of questioning traditional expectations of and on citizens, including the practice of democracy and interactions between elected officials and the electorate (Inglehart 1990; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Sampson 1967; Kaufmann and Feldman 2004). It also transmits knowledge of how politics operates. While a civic education hypothesis suggests this promotes increased electoral turnout – by reducing participation costs and raising interest in elections – as noted, there has also been much discussion about the role of education and societal modernisation in encouraging an alternative approach to politics adopted by a more sophisticated electorate (Norris 1999, 2003, 2011; Dalton 2005, 2006, 2008a, 2008b; Martin 2012b; Inglehart 1977, 1990; Norris et al 2005; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). HE individuals are assumed to be more capable and demanding of politics, acting on an issue-by-issue basis, and selective in

when they become active. They are not necessarily disinterested in politics nor are they dismissive of democracy as an ideal. Research across the UK, France, Spain, Austria, Finland, and Hungary, for example, finds today's young people – many being more educated – to be ambitious in the pursuit of democracy yet questioning and critical of how it currently operates (Cammaerts et al 2014; see also Harris et al 2010; Dermody et al 2010; Norris 1999, 2011; Dalton 2004, 2008a, 2008b). Crewe even argues these young people are often better informed and more interested than the average voter (Crewe 2002). Combined, these forces create a more volatile constituency of electors who are less guaranteed and more calculating in their electoral participation.

To incorporate this into my model, I start from Norris's critical citizen (1999, 2011). She contends that critical citizens are not only characterised by their negative opinions of regime institutions and performance. More important is how any criticism exists relative to individuals' political aspirations. This is informed by work on civic culture by Almond and Verba (1963). In their study the authors considered how cognitive orientations, such as beliefs about a political system as an idea, combine with affective and evaluational orientations – individuals' feelings and judgements about the political system in reality – to engender distinctive political cultures across countries. Accordingly, in Norris's cross-national comparison of critical citizen values she considers countries' mean differences between democratic aspirations (how important it is to live in a democratically governed country) and democratic satisfaction (how democratically the country is believed to be being currently governed). Interest is in the deficit which emerges when there is a strong commitment and approval of democratic principles yet sceptical assessments of how well democracy is performing (2011: 31; Pollock 1983). More recently, Seyd has adopted a similar approach to explore political disappointment in government policy performance (2016). It is a case of principle versus practice, and it is this which I apply to both frustrated electors and engaged activists within my first disaffection dimension.

Education is important not only in allowing individuals to be aware of politics and think of alternative actions but in shaping the expectations against which they judge the current system. Work on post-materialism, for example, while often discussed within a scarcity hypothesis (Inglehart 1977) offers evidence supportive of this. The traditional measures adopted by Inglehart in his four-element model – 'giving people more say in important political decisions' and 'protecting freedom of speech' – reflect democratic

ideals (ibid: 28; Warwick 1998). Similarly, he pays attention to law and order values which link to ideas of authoritarianism. Support for these has in turn been positively associated with educational attainment (Moors 2003). Through formal teaching and interactions within a diverse and politically engaged student body, students' exposure to new cultures and ideas increases (Rootes 1980), as does the promotion of self-actualising values. HE can therefore determine the adoption of the measures Inglehart employs. Educated individuals are not only likely to be critical of existing politics but also possess alternative ideas of it should work. As Maslow states, within a self-actualising logic, 'What a man can be, he must be' (1943: 382). Therefore, a disjuncture of high ideals, expectations, and internal efficacy versus low external efficacy, political trust, and perceived responsiveness sets the frustrated electors and engaged activists apart from the less well-educated marginalised citizens.

What is less clear in existing work is how these views manifest in political behaviour choices. I hypothesise that dissatisfied-disaffection should see two types of non-voting critical citizen emerge, not just one. Repertoire replacement theory claims that with the advantages of open participation opportunities, young people channel political energies into alternative participation (Stolle and Hooghe 2005: 159-64; Franklin 2002; Norris 2003; Dalton 2008a, 2008b; Dalton et al 2003; Martin 2012a, 2012b; Hustinx et al 2012). I do not discredit this possibility and would suggest that there exists an 'engaged activist' who behaves in this way. As Norris's analysis of the European Social Survey finds, younger people have a higher likelihood of engaging in more activist cause-oriented activities than both their parents and grandparents (2003: 16). Where individuals feel elections are ineffective and unable to meet their democratic ideals they turn to alternative ways of doing politics, rejecting and replacing voting in the process (see section 2.2 for discussion). I contend, however, that a far more prevalent group of individuals here is represented by a 'frustrated elector'.

Student and youth activism has often been overstated. Most young people, even in HE, while remaining wary of elections and less duty bound to vote, do not necessarily engage in extensive alternative participation repertoires. Doing so often requires issues and respective opportunities for action to emerge in addition to any inclination or preference for such methods. The Hansard Society in Britain recorded only 32 per cent of 18-24 year

olds as having done a range of thirteen different political activities¹¹ compared to a 48 per cent electorate average. Similarly, for future participation, only 70 per cent claimed they would consider at least one activity from this list – which included voting – versus an 80 per cent average (Hansard Society 2014: 48).

Similarly, studies of student protests and occupations in the UK during 2010 and 2011 – a response to HE funding changes – demonstrated that only a minority of students were ever involved in direct actions. Many more were simply highly critical of the government's policy and angry with formal politics (Rheingans and Hollands 2013; Hensby 2015; see also Harris et al 2010; Dermody et al 2010). As Hensby explores, even with a cause to rally behind and the opportunities for activism presented on campuses, barriers and the reluctance to participate endure where many students lack sufficient network mobilisation (2015). Furthermore, a candidate pledge activity at the preceding election alongside the protests and demonstrations during the bill's parliamentary passage failed to ensure students' preferred outcome was achieved. In this instance, electoral and alternative activities could both be viewed as ineffectual. Failures of this type can contribute to declining levels of external efficacy and a belief that there is little point to political participation (Levy 2013; Bandura 1995; see also Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Clarke and Acock 1989). Given the existence of election pledges on the issue, political trust may also have fallen where promises were felt to have been broken. The absence of high profile politicians supporting students may have built images of unresponsive and unrepresentative institutions. These views are at odds with the group's potential for action (see Condon and Holleque 2013). A tension therefore arises.

Simultaneously, however, while the electoral pledge may have been seen to have failed in the above instance, polling data also suggest that as the issue of tuition fees was being debated in parliament students expressed an increased interest in voting. In work I have undertaken with UK polling agency YouthSight, on a vote likelihood scale (from 1, not likely, to 10, certain) the student average peaked at 9.4 during the autumn of 2011 having

¹¹ Contacted local councillor/MP/MSP/Welsh Assembly Member; Contacted the media; Taken an active part in a campaign; Created or signed a paper petition; Created or signed an e-petition; Donated money or paid a membership fee to a charity or campaigning organisation; Boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons; Attended political meetings; Donated money or paid a membership fee to a political party; Taken part in a demonstration, picket or march; Voted in an election; Contributed to a discussion or campaign online or on social media; Taken part in a public consultation (Hansard Society 2014: 47).

only been 7.8 at the time of the 2010 general election (Snelling 2012: 3-4). Voting as a form of participation has not been wholly rejected.

These individuals might be considered monitorial (Schudson 1998; Hustinx et al 2012; Martin 2012b: 64) or standby (Amnå and Ekman 2014) in approach, scanning the political environment for occasions when they believe their participation might make a difference. While the traditional monitorial citizen of Schudson is assumed only to participate in non-electoral activities – the emergence of an issue itself suggesting a failure of electoral politics – the frustrated elector I propose is expected to vote if and when they perceive there to be reason and a timely opportunity to do so. For example, many young people appear to remain committed to elections in principle. They may not vote now but this is not always reflected in their future intentions. Research by Henn and Foard, for instance, found young people to be broadly supportive of the notion of voting, more than half (52 per cent) of their sample claiming they would feel a sense of satisfaction from turning out (2014: 379). Moreover, one cannot overlook the likely influence of more conventional civic education effects, particularly in minimising practical obstacles and raising political interest. Similarly, young people with high levels of education are still expected to be subject to influences of positioning within more electorally active networks, as discussed for the sorting model. Students at highly ranked universities can, for example, demonstrate high turnout potential with an average of 7.7 on a voter likelihood scale¹² reported for Russell Group students (Whiteley 2010: 3-4). Recognition must be given to the potential elector whose critique of politics leaves them frustrated and abstaining but not necessarily to an irreversible degree. Key issues for them are mobilisation during an election itself and party performance.

The frustrated elector can subsequently be framed within issue-based or consumer voting – the search for a party meeting their policy preferences. Where no party is believed to make sufficient reference to an elector's concerns or if an election fails to capture their attention, they are more likely to abstain (Himmelweit et al 1985; McDonald and Budge 2005; Martin 2012b). Developments in politics, especially perception of convergence by parties on the median voter (Hay 2007; Downs 1957; Furlong and Cartmel 2007), are anticipated to worsen these concerns, especially where there exists frustration at politicians' and parties' neglecting of young people's priority

¹² From 1 (certain not to vote) to 10 (certain to vote) if an election were to be held tomorrow.

issues (Dalton 2006; Sloam 2013, 2014a; Marsh et al 2007; Levine and Cureton 1998). When individuals are young, electoral context and political offers can act to exacerbate their level of electoral frustration and this perceived democratic deficit. Where this prevents them from developing a voting habit and party attachment, this could contribute to rising abstention.

In summary, by educating young people, developing their skills, and exposing them to alternative values and ideas, Dalton believes 'more people can now deal with the complexities of politics and make their own political decisions' (2006: 9). They may be more likely to question traditional duty-based conceptions of voting, leading to their withdrawal from guaranteed participation in elections (see Blais and Rubenson 2013). The frustrated electors – which I argue comprise the majority within this highly educated dissatisfied-disaffected citizenry – are characterised by a continued interest in politics and a commitment to democracy and elections and yet their negative judgements on politics' current performance and operation. They engage only when parties, elections, and political processes mobilise them by meeting their expectations and offering tangible rewards within this. Alternative participation may still be pursued but not on a regular basis or in a way which prioritises it at the expense of voting. The engaged activist, contrastingly, demonstrates a more extreme manifestation where internal efficacy is especially high and their democratic ideals place greater emphasis on direct citizen involvement. Any criticism becomes much harsher, heightened by feelings of relative deprivation and unfairness within the formal political system (see Smith et al 2012), and so while still pursuing a political voice, they withdraw from elections to pursue alternative activities. Crucially, they are supported to do so by the resources and opportunities afforded by their student status, something missing in other grievance cases (see Kern et al 2015).

2.6. Marginalised citizens

Traditionally the critical citizen has been associated with a highly educated constituency, as is demonstrated in the frustrated elector and engaged activist. I would propose, however, that instead of being simply apathetic, individuals within disadvantaged communities also find their political participation determined by elements of critical citizenship (see also Holmes and Manning 2013). They will not, however, hold the exact same set of attitudes of HE young people. Instead, my marginalised citizen displays a

distinct form of alienated-disaffection. As the sorting model theory argues, young people without HE experience enjoy fewer opportunities to interact with politically engaged individuals. They face limited normative pressure with regards to voting or alternative participation. Equally, from the logic of civic education effects, it is this group which will likely face the greatest costs associated with participating since their absolute knowledge and interest is also potentially lower. Where I develop these ideas is in considering how experiences of social positioning and relative education can further affect efficacy and democratic satisfaction. Educational hierarchies might influence individuals' perceptions of themselves as political actors and of the political world they encounter. When individuals without HE see the value of their education declining it is my contention that they begin viewing themselves as politically powerless, regardless of the political system they encounter and how open or not it might be, and irrespective of absolute attainment.

Research tells us that a perceived lack of civic skills and understanding can lower electors' confidence in participating at elections (Henn and Foard 2012: 53-4; Gallego 2010; see also Nie et al 1996: 11-94). While this is undoubtedly likely to be influenced by absolute education and formal knowledge, there is also a possible role played by relative education effects. When viewing their political knowledge and skill in the context of levels thought to be possessed in wider society, non-HE individuals may feel especially ill-prepared. They may have sufficient skills – citizenship education, for example, in theory supporting young people to participate politically where it is delivered successfully (Keating et al 2010; Whiteley 2014). However, positioning can leave them feeling less capable in fields deemed 'intellectual' or associated with high social status simply from their being labelled as 'not highly educated'. Increasingly viewed as 'below average' (Tenn 2005) a self-fulfilling prophecy might take effect and dampen their internal efficacy.

Condon and Holleque argue that general self-efficacy – affected by educational and social positioning experiences – can be incredibly important for first time voters (2013; Solhaug 2006). Without political experience on which to draw, and from which to develop a more traditional sense of internal or external political efficacy, young people entering the electorate often look towards wider life experiences. Feelings of power and evaluations of 'capacity for success and agency in life across different domains and tasks' (2013: 169; Gecas 1989: 302-9; Blais and St-Vincent 2011: 402-4) impact on whether

they believe they can also influence politics. Within a theory focused on education's social positioning effects, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds will find their social position associated with experiences of marginalisation. Both Condon and Holleque (2013) and Gecas (1989) report significant, strong, and positive correlations between social position and self-efficacy. Studies show how being outside employment and education in youth can lead to generalised (feelings of) social exclusion and isolation (Thompson et al 2014: 69; Henn et al 2007: 467; Henn and Foard 2014; Diemer and Li 2011: 1815-7; see also Holmes and Manning 2013; Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Banaji and Cammaerts 2015). Non-HE young people can therefore lack opportunities to develop their internal political efficacy, viewing themselves as incapable and formal political institutions as inaccessible to someone like them (Levy 2013; Tenn 2005; Condon and Holleque 2013; Henn and Foard 2014; Wray-Lake and Hart 2012; Gecas 1989; Diemer and Li 2011; Bastedo 2015; Cohen et al 2001; Hoskins et al 2016).

They could also feel unrepresented given the demographic profile of many leading politicians where university qualifications have almost become a prerequisite. In Westminster, almost a quarter (24 per cent) of the 2010 cohort of MPs were Oxbridge educated (Smith Institute 2010: 3). In the American Congress in 2014, 93 per cent of House Members and 99 per cent of Senators held bachelor's degrees (Manning 2014: 5). This can reinforce low external efficacy and perceived political unresponsiveness to an even greater extent and more so than for frustrated electors and engaged activists. There is a high likelihood of cynicism possible among disadvantaged young people over politics' openness and responsiveness to those individuals for whom their education has been devalued (Holmes and Manning 2013; Diemer and Li 2011; Cammaerts et al 2014; Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Henn and Foard 2014; Harris et al 2010). The costs of voting may not be judged to outweigh any potential benefits for this group if politicians appear distant and unrepresentative. This exacerbates the lack of social pressure assumed to feature within their social networks and the already greater practical barriers to participation they face.

Contrastingly, individuals attaining high levels of educational success are more likely to possess a general self-efficacy given their top ranking in academic stratification. They are typically more confident in their abilities being transferable from academic pursuits into political activity whether they are well-informed on the subject or not (Condon and Holleque 2013; Levy 2013; Gecas 1989; Collingwood 2012). Condon and Holleque, for

example, also found education specifically to have a strong and significant association with general self-efficacy (2013: 181). Equally, with expectations of future success, HE students can adopt 'upwardly mobile' thinking, so perceiving themselves as already closer to the political system (Kaufmann and Feldman 2004: 482-3; Weakliem 1992: 153-5; Smets and van Ham 2013: 350; Bastedo 2015). They share more in common with elected representatives and, we might assume, feel more capable of engaging with a political system in which they anticipate they will be listened to.

The seemingly inevitable outcome is that the marginalised citizen withdraws from politics altogether, not only unwilling to participate in elections but averse to taking the time to follow politics. Their negative opinions are heavily entrenched. Without possessing a strong sense of internal efficacy nor coming into contact with politicised social networks there exists little force to compel this group to reverse its feeling of marginalisation. Importantly, I do not believe, however, that this is purely apathy or that these young people view politics with total indifference. It is still possible there remains a critical, albeit alienated, judgement within their decision-making. As a respondent, albeit in their 30s but from a low-educated and disadvantaged background, in a study by Holmes and Manning on working class political disaffection in Northern England stated:

'I tend not to er, actively follow politics – you know, if I hear something or read something I'll take it in. . . . I feel that the original idea of politics and government isn't kept to – in fact, we're very far away from it. The original idea is, you know, you have a village or a town and people bickering over what's best for the town. So therefore you, you know, elect someone to speak for the people and to make decisions on the majority. Um, and I don't believe that that happens today.' (Quoted in Holmes and Manning 2013: 488)

While in relative and absolute terms, young people who do not pursue post-compulsory schooling are less likely to feel confident in their own political ability it cannot be overlooked that many are now part of the first generation likely to be receiving some form of citizenship education (Schulz et al 2010). As discussed previously, this can provide them with basic political knowledge and an ability to engage somewhat critically with politics and elections, even if for some groups this is not strengthened through other political socialisation experiences. We should not necessarily view these young people as wholly incapable of making independent and critical judgements on politics even if their own and others' perceptions imply otherwise (Whiteley 2014; Schulz et al 2010). Equally, their absolute education level is higher than that of previous generations while

we exist within an information and media age in which political learning can take place across multiple platforms. It remains appropriate to view the marginalised citizen as making political choices within a disaffected citizenry framework.

In the context of relative education effects, a connected relative deprivation theory would suggest this could still encourage political participation. For relative deprivation effects to take hold, there first must be: comparison, an assessment of disadvantage, and a belief that the disadvantage is unfair (Smith et al 2012: 204). All three components could be seen in operation among young people, particularly those who are already more disadvantaged in absolute terms, where they view themselves as losing out and marginalised. Meanwhile, associated emotions – including anger – have been seen to be a powerful mobiliser for political action (Van Zomeren 2016; Valentino et al 2011). Historically, this has been most evident in the American Civil Rights Movement (Miller et al 1981). However, where I would argue this group differs from frustrated electors and engaged activists is in their lack of confidence in their own ability to participate, their limited access to resources, and weaker group consciousness. Research on the impact of relative deprivation on political participation, in the context of the European economic crisis, finds resources associated with civic voluntarism are crucial for translating grievance into action (Kern et al 2015), while the effects are also much stronger when an individual considers themselves a member of a disadvantaged group and able to act through that group (Van Zomeren 2016). Young people outside of HE often have more limited resources and, in an increasingly atomised society (Putnam 2000), weaker networks through which to become active. Thus, while arguably more disadvantaged in absolute terms, the impact of relative deprivation is likely to be stronger among HE young people – the frustrated electors and engaged activists, who also observe a mismatch between expectations and reality. Among the non-HE group, feelings of anger or resentment will likely still lead to disengagement and thus their disaffection is more indicative of alienation.

2.7. Mobilised voters

It is widely established that age has a positive impact on turnout – at least until electors become elderly and possibly unable to vote within practical considerations (Bhatti and Hansen 2012). This finding not only contributes to questions explored within the thesis but has also meant the focus for many scholars has been, as the title of Kimberlee's 2002

article states, answering the question, '[w]hy don't young people vote at general elections?' (2002). What has been paid less attention is why some young people continue to vote in spite of the forces which could, in other circumstances, compel them to abstain. As Blais asserts, any study of turnout should pay attention not only to why people do not vote but why they *do* vote (2000). Regardless of whether young people are less likely to vote, in the 2010 and 2015 UK general elections over two-fifths cast a ballot (Ipsos-MORI 2010, 2015). In some countries, youth turnout is also much higher, for instance 80.2 and 77.5 per cent in national elections for Italy and Denmark, respectively, in 2001 (Fieldhouse et al 2007: 804). They cannot be ignored despite this being a 'deviant' outcome. If I am to claim there are three key types of *non-voting* young people in the disaffected citizenry, I must also acknowledge a fourth group of *voting* young people existing alongside this. Within the framework presented here, I refer to them as mobilised voters. They may certainly still hold negative opinions and in some respects be deemed critical but this will rarely overpower an inclination to vote which develops from mobilisation forces. These are thought to occur through social networks (both direct recruitment and normative pressure) as well as from parties themselves in their political offers.

In many ways the mobilised voter should be viewed as being influenced by their educational experiences when they decide how to behave at elections. Both civic education and repertoire replacement theories, even if disagreeing on the behavioural outcome, agree that a higher level of education encourages greater interest in politics and confers more understanding and knowledge. Meanwhile, the sorting model suggests that when individuals are surrounded by electorally active individuals – often true of more educated groups of young people in and around university campuses – they will internalise and adopt these social norms and values. Thus we could expect these forces among some young people to overpower tendencies towards disaffection they may hold and which, in the case of frustrated, engaged, and marginalised individuals are diminishing their sense of electoral obligation. Mobilised voters cannot therefore be defined in the language of *non-voting* disaffected citizenry since the primary force directing their behaviour – unlike in the other citizenry types – is not their perceptions and relative evaluations of politics. Instead, their turnout decision is based to a much a greater extent on consideration of expected behaviours within their social networks, supported by a certain level of interest and knowledge aiding the decision to participate,

and by the mobilisation they encounter during election campaigns. The mechanisms at work are more consistent with classic assumptions.

Evidently, it is also possible that these mobilised voters are not as critical of politics as other young people. While they may demonstrate similar attitudes to that of frustrated electors but place less weight on these considerations (where they prioritise their voting commitment above their judgements of politics), in other instances the gap they perceive between their democratic principles and practice might simply be much smaller. For example, if and where they are strong partisans – admittedly less common among young people (see Tilley 2003; Martin 2012b) – they may believe the political system and operation of democracy to be satisfactory since there is a group they believe can represent them effectively in politics. If it is a leading party, it has a reasonable chance of success. As discussed, Campbell and colleagues demonstrated how party identification can colour individuals' policy preferences and attitudes towards candidates (1960). Partisan young people could therefore cultivate more positive attitudes towards politics overall, and so experience less reluctance to participate. The higher levels of partisanship among older voters, alongside their higher turnout, is suggestive of this potential effect in operation. A different perspective is that negative views remain strongly in place among these electors, but that the prospect of an unacceptable government mobilises some people to vote even if they are otherwise critical of politics. However, in contrast to frustrated electors, this argument implies a preferred alternative exists – even if only marginally preferred – and that individuals here are also able to observe differences between parties so as to assess one as more acceptable than another. On this latter point, there is a view that over time, electors have come to feel increasingly unable to distinguish between parties (Hay 2007) and so we might expect this form of mobilisation to be less prevalent for today's young people. Nevertheless, in more extreme cases 'negative mobilisation', similar to a protest vote, could be important.

The impact of these factors and existence of the mobilised voter further help to explain continued turnout inequalities and the persistence of significant and positive individual education effects in youth (Henn and Foard 2014; Janmaat et al 2014), as well as the differences between young and old where education levels are comparable. It also allows integration of logic from both repertoire replacement and sorting model hypotheses, as well as a more classic civic education hypothesis. For instance, it can be suggested that while HE young people may be less electorally participative than older electorate

members – and still present themselves as a puzzle – their social network positioning and absolute education continues to create some degree of turnout advantage.

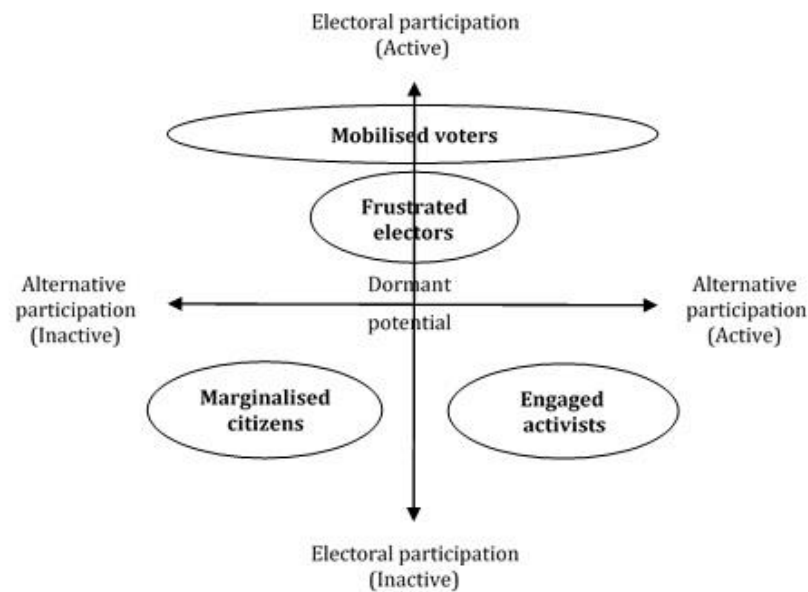


Figure 2.2: Proposed connections between participation repertoires and disaffected citizenry

Figure 2.2 indicates how these mobilised voters are assumed to vary in their approach to participation from the three non-voting types, as well as how the non-voters themselves vary. Individuals' engagement in certain political activities can vary from being wholly inactive, to their having a dormant potential for action, to being highly active. This can be determined by their relative levels of activity across electoral and alternative participation acts. Both marginalised and engaged types are thought to be entirely inactive for elections. The frustrated would instead be positioned more centrally, not necessarily voting but seeing value in doing so, and also not wholly averse to alternative participation even if unlikely to demonstrate high levels of activism. The mobilised, while potentially varying in their pursuit of alternative participation are those who remain active electoral participators in all instances.

2.8. Conceptual framework

Typologies are useful for conceptualising different types of citizen and are a way of incorporating the disaffected citizenry into an explanatory framework. By adopting a typological approach to theory construction, research can develop middle-range

theories which are applicable to specific ideal types within a grand theory or explanation (Doty and Glick 1994: 243-5). In my proposed framework there are three non-voter types within an overarching explanation centred on disaffection attitudes. As Dunleavy claims, too often traditional political behaviour theories adopt a commitment to monastic and totalising tendencies which lead them to seek a 'single best decision algorithm' for elector decision-making. Instead, we should look at different groups with separate and distinct algorithms (1996: 279-81). Even though there are only two possible outcomes proposed – voting or abstaining – I have argued above that there are different causal paths and decision-making processes in operation to explain these behaviours. A typology helps to understand these varied experiences. Thinking about later stages of the research project and its wider impact, a typology also allows for more effective targeting of strategies aimed at increasing voter turnout when the model is disseminated externally to policy actors. Different groups may require unique interventions depending on how entrenched their abstention is and where it fits within their wider approaches to political participation.

To place these groups of the disaffected citizenry within the same typological model and examine how their behaviours combine to affect overall youth turnout rate, Keniston's idea of a continuum of participation is useful. When studying student movements of the 1960s, he was able to draw a distinction between an activist youth who responds through outward actions to force change, and an alienated youth who responds by turning inward and withdrawing from the political system (1967: 111). I too focus on two dominant dimensions: the dissatisfied-disaffection of the frustrated electors and engaged activists and the alienated-disaffection of the marginalised citizens. I attach likely educational experiences to each group based on the causal mechanisms proposed which cover disaffection attitudes, mobilisation processes, and opportunities for activism. Non-HE young people, are considered most likely to fulfil the characteristics of the marginalised citizen while HE young people would be considered to meet the descriptions attributed to the frustrated and engaged, as well as mobilised voters, principally due to their greater interaction in politicised social networks. These relationships and characteristics are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Hypothesised disaffected citizenry types and associations with political participation preferences			
Disaffection type	Attitudinal characteristics	Political participation preferences	Electoral behaviour
Marginalised citizen	Low democratic ideals Low internal political efficacy Low external political efficacy	Low support for electoral participation	Abstains
	Low political trust/ responsiveness	Low support for alternative participation	
Frustrated elector	High democratic ideals High internal political efficacy Low external political efficacy	Moderate support for electoral participation	Abstains
	Low political trust/ responsiveness	Moderate support for alternative participation	
Engaged activist	High democratic ideals High internal political efficacy Low external political efficacy	Low support for electoral participation	Abstains
	Low political trust/ responsiveness	High support for alternative participation	
Mobilised voter	High democratic ideals High internal political efficacy High external political efficacy	High support for electoral participation	Votes
	High political trust/ responsiveness	Moderate support for alternative participation	

Evidently, not all individuals will perfectly meet these profiles. For instance, a small group of non-HE, disadvantaged youth might not simply disengage from politics as the ‘ideal’ marginalised citizen would. I argue that for non-HE young people, relative deprivation – given it does not coexist alongside sufficient resources or strong collective identity – is likely to have a weak impact. However, when taking effect among groups considered the *most* disadvantaged, it can manifest itself in activity of a particularly non-institutionalised, protest, and even violent nature (Gurr 1968). A recent example would be in 2014 in Ferguson, Missouri where a racially-determined form of relative deprivation – in the context of citizen-police tensions and a trigger event – prompted protests and eventually rioting. Similarly, riots across Europe by socially excluded youth in response to severe economic crises (Sloam 2013: 838). We might, therefore, uncover a strand of alternative participation potential among some otherwise ‘marginalised citizens’. Nevertheless, the theoretical and conceptual framework presented here is based on the notion of ideal types and seeks to uncover and understand notably prevalent participation responses within a turnout decision. Illegal rioting and protest

activity instigated by disadvantaged youth still also remains relatively infrequent within most established democracies unless prompted by an extreme crisis. Equally, it is questionable to what extent this truly reflects political action of the 'activist' kind versus a triggered and apolitical response to a particular societal event or situation.

To place the framework within the context of young people's overall lower level of turnout compared to older groups, I argue that in addition to life-cycle factors and associated incentives and pressures for them to vote, generational changes are seeing these individuals entering the electorate within a different educational context. It is not just that education has expanded, for example. The nature of education has also altered, moving away from a duty-based and authority-led system towards one which favours self-expression and individualisation (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Consequently, even where disaffection exists beyond the youth population, a non-voting disaffected citizenry will not necessarily be as prevalent. Instead, there will be a higher proportion of mobilised voters who even if critical of politics will continue to turn out through a stronger sense of mobilisation associated with norm-compliance and obligation. Disaffection does not occupy as dominant a position in their turnout decision-making process, hence the age-disparity in turnout rates across the electorate. A duty-based conception of politics is gradually weakening across the generations to the point where voting has become the deviant, unexpected behaviour.

These views shape the expectations and hypotheses I next present in Chapter 3 and where I consider how the proposed framework can be operationalised, tested, and refined through new research and analysis. Ultimately, this thesis is concerned with the overarching hypothesis that to understand and explain the youth electoral participation puzzle, we must think differently about how education affects individuals' approaches to political participation. It argues that where education has changed – in scope, content, style, and in its aggregate level as HE expands – a non-voting disaffected citizenry has emerged among these younger, more educated generations. For the relatively less well-educated, the disincentives for voting associated with this are exacerbated. For those individuals seemingly benefitting from educational expansion, those gaining HE experience, pressures to vote are mitigated by alternative ideals and expectations.

3. Methodology and methods

Methods present researchers with the practical tools to conduct their research, including ‘the procedures and activities for selecting, collecting, organising, and analysing data’ (Blaikie 2010: 8). Methods choices, however, should always be accompanied by issues more closely related to methodology. This involves consideration of the specific questions and purpose of project, what it is seeking to test or uncover, as well as the potential audiences. Equally, attention should be paid to the researcher’s own ontological and epistemological positions within the framing of their research inquiry to establish both the specific objects and nature of phenomenon under study and the ways in which knowledge about this is best sought (ibid: 8). This chapter presents my research design – including hypotheses development – and the methods and data chosen to examine these.

3.1. Research questions

Individual voter turnout is the primary variable of interest under investigation. Specifically, the puzzle driving the research concerns the reason(s) why the probability of voting remains so low and on an increasingly downward trend among young people – those aged 18-24 years – despite changes to and the expansion of education. At the most general level, this is a question of youth turnout yet the apparent education-participation paradox raises further issues. What factors are mitigating conventional pro-voting education effects, and how is this happening? Should we be challenging established assumptions to consider greater diversity in education effects, across groups and contexts? These considerations move the research from studying the wider phenomenon of age-associated variation to incorporating such thinking into investigations centred on the ways educational experiences in youth, influenced by individual characteristics and environmental conditions, differently determine young people’s turnout decisions. As introduced at the very start of the dissertation, my central question is:

1. *Why is the comparatively higher level of education enjoyed by young people today not associated with a higher level of voter turnout?*

More specifically, as developed in Chapter 2, I am interested in how young people’s educational experiences shape their attitudes towards politics – their ideals and

perceptions – and connectedly, their overall approaches to political participation. Decisions about turnout and their willingness to vote will clearly comprise a key component of the political character their attitudes and approaches engender. Two further questions arise regarding the existence and multiplicity of a disaffected citizenry in youth and the varied mechanisms through which educational experiences cause non-voting behaviours to emerge within this.

2. *To what extent and how do educational experiences in youth shape young people's political attitudes and approaches to political participation?*
3. *To what extent and how are young people's political attitudes and approaches to political participation, alongside their educational experiences, significant in determining their turnout behaviours at general elections?*

Combined, these questions consider the mechanisms through which education can affect turnout, the potential moderating effect of disaffection, and the elements of educational experience which reinforce or diminish the strength and significance of these processes. To answer them, it is my intention to examine prevailing theories within the literature, concentrating on those elements of repertoire replacement, critical citizens, and the sorting model, which I adapted for a youth constituency in the preceding chapter. This assessment of each for their applicability to explaining the youth participation puzzle forms part of a wider process of testing, refining, and developing the new explanatory framework I have proposed. Doing so aims at accommodating these separate yet potentially complementary schools of thought as operating in tandem. This establishes how much can be learnt and taken from our current understanding of education's impacts on political participation, where and to what extent different effects operate, why this occurs, and finally, where gaps in our existing knowledge remain.

3.2. The dependent variable: political participation as voter turnout

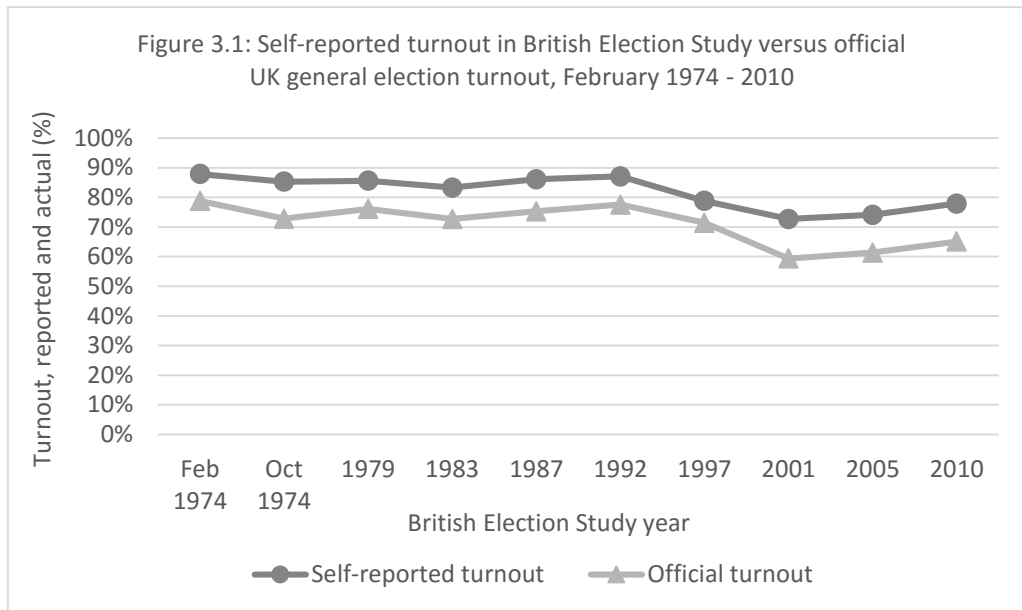
Research concerning the participation puzzle arises first and foremost in observations of aggregate turnout trends, being identified by rising abstention over time alongside patterns of educational expansion. This leads many scholars to pursue analysis at a macro-level by modelling interactions between the societal and individual-level phenomena (Nie et al 1996; Campbell 2009; Tenn 2005; Persson 2011, 2013). As the

above questions indicate, however, my interest is on the micro-level, individual decision-making processes which lead some electors to turn out and others to abstain. I want to explore the mechanisms through which educational experiences affect turnout, using the discoveries to illuminate our understanding of the wider trends. The dependent variable, to which all analysis is ultimately focused is, therefore, individual voter turnout; who among young people abstains, at what rate, and why? It is operationalised here as self-reported turnout at general elections as recorded through social surveys.

My decision to focus on general election voting is based on it being here, as first-order elections, where turnout is typically highest since the most is at stake (Lijphart 1997: 5). By directly impacting on who is in government and being the most formal and regularised way in which individuals can influence a governing policy agenda, these elections are highly significant. Accordingly, mobilisation efforts by parties and civil society groups are usually greatest here, as is media attention. Many of the decisions affecting a country's interactions in institutions – such as the EU – or the budgets and powers allocated to local, devolved, or regional bodies are impacted upon by centralised decision-making. Low turnout would not be considered to result from a lack of awareness to the same extent as imagined for second-order elections (Schmitt 2005). Research could nonetheless be extended in the future to see if similar patterns emerge across different electoral settings and systems. It is vital here though to ensure standardisation by electoral system, party choice, timing, and electorate, to control for institutional variation as much as possible.

3.2.1. Turnout self-reporting

Self-reported turnout can never be as accurate an indicator of electoral participation as validated turnout data, that which matches survey respondents to their actual vote. There is potential for misreporting as a result of memory issues (Belli et al 1999) and concerns with social desirability (Bernstein et al 2001; Cassel 2003; Belli et al 1999; Katosh and Traugott 1981). More often than not it results in over-reporting, social surveys over-estimating turnout where individuals feel compelled to present themselves as a 'good citizen' who will not be judged negatively for their not turning out. As an example, I have found this to be has been common in consecutive British Election Studies. An average *reported turnout* of 81.9 per cent between February 1974 and 2010 is much higher than the 71.1 per cent *actual turnout* average for the period (Figure 3.1).



Source: British Election Studies February 1974 – 2010¹³, unweighted, n ranging from 1,874 (1979) to 4,158 (2005); Official turnout taken from McGuinness et al (2012).

Problematically, validation studies research – for example, where polling station records of local turnout are matched against survey participants to assess the reliability of their self-reporting (Howat et al 2011: 13-5) – has found over-reporting of this nature is not random. Rather, systematic patterns exist with groups such as the better educated and stronger partisans being more likely to report a false-positive. They are felt to face greater social costs if seen to abstain (Bernstein et al 2001). Compounding this, respondents to any form of political research can often be more politically engaged than non-respondents (Bartle 2003: 234), further distorting turnout rates with self-selection bias. Gaps between groups can therefore look greater than exists in reality. However, as Cassel states, most turnout research ‘by necessity, uses self-reported turnout data’ (2003: 88). A preference for only validated data can limit researchers in the secondary datasets available to them while it is not without precedent to rely on self-reporting.

Under-reporting also occurs. Electors can be vulnerable to forgetting whether they voted in a specific election, particularly if the elections are low salience (Adamany and Shelley 1980). One might also imagine that if dissatisfied with an election outcome and subsequent government agenda, individuals may prefer not to admit participating.

¹³ Alt et al (no date), Clarke et al (2003, 2006), Crewe et al (no date a, no date b), Heath et al (no date, 1993a), Heath et al (1993b), Heath et al (1999), Whiteley and Sanders (2014).

However, while acknowledging this possibility, additional research suggests the occurrence of under-reporting is relatively small. In Fullerton et al's study of US National Election Studies under-reporting was limited to approximately only five per cent of survey respondents (2007: 654).

If self-reported turnout rarely provides a true picture of electoral participation, studies have nevertheless suggested it is unlikely to corrupt significantly results concerning relationships between variables and/or their estimated effects in voting behaviour models (Bernstein et al 2001; Cassel 2003; Katosh and Traugott 1981; Sigelman 1982). Alternative indicators of self-predicted or potential turnout could be employed in the absence of validated turnout data. However, while avoiding problems of recall it is unclear as to whether social desirability effects would be reduced. Rogers and Aida suggest their usefulness in statistical modelling does not surpass that of past voting behaviour (2014). Where they might be helpful is in reducing potential age bias, for example with young people who have had fewer opportunities to participate in elections (see Martin 2012a). However, if the dependent variable remains self-reported turnout at a single past election – the election closest to the survey fieldwork period to minimise recall issues (Belli et al 1999) – rather than a summative scale of past participation for multiple elections, this should not generate concerns. Weighting procedures will also be used to minimise over-reporting biases (see 3.7.3). As now discussed below, however, 'willingness' remains helpful for establishing and defining participation repertoires.

3.2.2. Participation potential: alternative activities, approaches, and repertoires

While concentrating on voter turnout, I situate this within a wider understanding of political participation approaches – specifically, the preferences individuals have for engagement across a range of activities and their repertoire of potential action. The framework presented in Chapter 2 argues that these, alongside disaffection, shape the eventual turnout decision of an individual. They are also likely to develop through educational experiences and in response to disaffection. Individuals' perceptions of formal politics can colour the way in which certain activities are viewed. These preferences are a point of interest in themselves and contribute to an elector typology by assessing not only the likelihood an individual votes in a given election but the extent to which they can be considered 'pro-voting' in character. Results here should have important implications in establishing how entrenched abstention is or whether there is

a foundation of political activity present upon which voting initiatives can be built. This information can then be presented to a policy audience to support work aiming to engage young people in electoral processes.

At stages throughout the analysis I consequently include data relating to alternative political participation alongside a past turnout. This aids the creation of 'ideal' elector types. Alternative participation preferences act both as dependent variables – for examining why and how certain approaches to participation develop among young people – and as independent variables which are influential within an eventual turnout decision. Their inclusion can also test repertoire replacement theories, the proposed engaged activist thought to reject voting in favour of alternative participation activities. Equally, the marginalised citizen, assumed to have withdrawn from political participation, electoral or otherwise, can also be identified with reference to responses here.

As discussed previously, no single definition of alternative participation exists and various forms and facets of activity can be studied. Within a project which utilises secondary data (see 3.6), I am to some extent limited to those activities found in existing studies. With an ultimate focus on voter turnout, I have suggested Brady's criteria (1999: 737) is nevertheless most helpful in selecting appropriate activity variables within these. It ensures activities have something in common with electoral participation so can feasibly be considered as alternative means for reaching similar goals. Volunteering might be classified as civic or citizenship activity but does not necessarily contain a political component. Brady's definition is also broad enough, however, that it does not limit the research's scope to only a narrow range of activities which, in the case of young people, might miss more relevant acts and distort the research (see O'Toole et al 2003). Equally, if only exclusively online activities are studied older groups could be under-represented (Oser et al 2013). In Brady's definition there is room to be selective, to comply with the research goals, without restricting the analysis to too small or exclusive a range of activities.

Alternative activities should not, however, be taken as the same or equivalent in all respects; there remain clear differences in what they involve, how accessible they are, and the resources required. Recognising such variation is important since some may be more related to disaffection than others, and similarly variously related to age and

education. The resource of time and being free from the commitments associated with adulthood could see students being particularly attracted to protest and campaign activities (Crossley 2008). Boycotting and ethical consumerism, requiring financial resources, may be less popular in this constituency. Activities with connections to party politics, including canvassing and contacting, might be unattractive to individuals displaying disaffection on responsiveness dimensions since they may wish to distance themselves from formal political actors. Or, alternatively, individuals involved in party politics may develop a high sense of responsiveness (the relationship may be mutually reinforcing). Statistical techniques can support these theoretical distinctions between types – for example, factor analysis (see Parry et al 1992: 42-52) or latent class analysis (Oser et al 2013; Hustinx et al 2012; Oser and Hooghe 2013). Below, I introduce my chosen statistical methods for acknowledging this variation in my own conceptual framework. These discussions are also developed further throughout the analysis chapters during presentation of the procedures and results as I build and critique my models. The specific activities and variables I use, as with all variables featuring in the analysis, are presented in Appendix A (original question wording, response options, and dataset variable name).

A final issue of note is while primarily using past behaviour to measure turnout, I utilise information on self-reported *willingness* to participate when studying alternative participation and creating repertoires of participation. This minimises the anti-youth bias where older respondents are drawing on more years' opportunity (Martin 2012a: 215). It may be unclear from responses, if not time-bound, at what age they engaged in the activity. Due to the nature of alternative participation and its more stand-by elements (Amnå and Ekman 2014) – unlike voting, it requires issues to emerge – past behaviour records can miss the presence of alternative mind-sets and elector ideas. It is by design that the repertoires I include are concerned with preferences so they can help examine how individuals, non-voters in particular, view voting against other activities. I do not require an individual to have actually done an activity to capture their approach to participation. This information can also be compared alongside turnout potential, measured by individuals' willingness to vote in future elections, to establish their participation preferences. The frustrated elector, for example, would be non-voting yet still committed to voting in the future. Thus they would be expected to vary from a marginalised citizen on this preference even if reporting the same behaviour at a previous election.

3.3. Research hypotheses

To explore the research questions and dependent variable of voter turnout, and to test applicability of the disaffected citizenry as an explanatory framework, there are a number of associated hypotheses. My overall thesis is that, perhaps counterintuitively, *educational expansion and an emancipatory-individualist pedagogical shift is responsible for there now being a prominent non-voting disaffected citizenry among young people*. As a result of rising education levels, today's young people are more capable and willing to criticise politics and more likely next to take this into account when deciding whether or not to vote. This constituency demographic is characterised by greater reluctance to engage in formal electoral politics with individuals reporting low turnout and high disaffection.

Two claims concerning young electors nest within this, the stated changes to education: *1) reinforcing and strengthening the negative effect associated with possessing a relatively lower level of educational experience among a non-HE youth, and 2) encouraging a more demanding and selective approach to politics and participation among an HE youth*. The analysis which follows tests these claims in which disaffection is presented not only as being more prevalent in youth but a more significant turnout determinant; *as a result of educational changes, both its expansion and shifting emphasis, young people's participation preferences and resultant electoral behaviours are defined to a much greater extent by political disaffection than is seen for other, older electors*.

3.3.1. Initial assumptions

Before translating these statements into new testable hypotheses, there are three preliminary propositions also requiring investigation. These are not new hypotheses *per se* but reflect existing ideas and conventional thought within the framework I am building. It is a necessary precursor to re-examine these in order to test and refine the disaffected citizenry since they provide the foundations for its theoretical development.

The explanations I propose have implications for over-time trends to suggest that as a population becomes more educated, the simultaneous decline in voter turnout is related, in part, to growing disaffection. Society as a whole becomes more capable of critiquing politics and more willing to do so. Meanwhile marginalised individuals within this,

through the social exclusion associated with educational inflation, have a growing reason for adopting an especially cynical and apathetic outlook. As such, higher rates of dissatisfaction should be observed today than in the past. This longitudinal component does not form the focus of my analysis but remains important for context. Following similar logic, disaffection should also be higher among young people, since they will always be (on average) the most educated generation in any industrialised society and one in which the relative gap between high and low educated groups is greatest. Linking this to voter turnout, it is further anticipated that where individuals' disaffection is high, positive turnout decisions are less likely. Hence, from particular educational experiences disaffection can be seen as contributing to young people's lower turnout. The following statements are a starting point for assessing this contention:

- *As a growing proportion of individuals have experienced higher education over time, there has been a concurrent increase in disaffection.*
- *Young people demonstrate greater disaffection – both alienated and dissatisfied – with politics than other, older electors.*
- *Individual turnout at general elections is negatively associated with political disaffection; when an individual's political disaffection is high, the likelihood of having voted is low.*

These assumptions are explored within the first stage of my empirical analysis. The resultant findings provide a setting within which the disaffected citizenry framework and connected hypotheses can be applied, modified, or supported.

3.3.2. Hypotheses and the disaffected citizenry

My first testable hypothesis posits that the impact of disaffection is greater on young people's turnout decisions than on the decisions of other, older electors. This is thought to result from their additional youth disadvantages (such as, the lack of electoral habits and first-time voter start-up costs) but also their educational experiences. Even those not attending university will have typically received more education than non-graduates within older constituencies following rising school leaving ages. They have also benefitted from widening access to information, been impacted on by moves from deference- to more agency-promoting education, and often experienced an increased emphasis on citizenship learning in schools. These factors should exacerbate and

reinforce disaffection from the perspective of critical citizenship – individuals can be more demanding and questioning – so as to afford these attitudes a more prominent position in their voting calculus. They are likely to outweigh other, potentially pro-voting forces. Many young people would therefore be expected to comprise a *non-voting disaffected citizenry* and more so than other electoral groups.

H1: The negative impact of political disaffection on individual voter turnout at general elections is greater for young people than for other, older electors.

Alongside this, a further argument states that non-voting young people, irrespective of individual educational experience, are more likely to report participation repertoires in which voting is relegated to a lower priority position. This relates to how voting fits within an individual's overarching approach to participation and the relative preference it enjoys, if at all. Arguably, conventional education effects might remain in operation for some young people. For example, individuals with HE experience could at least be supportive of elections and still rate this highly within their preferences despite actually abstaining (frustrated electors). As the newest and most educated sector of the electorate, however, it would also be argued that for some with HE experience the combination of this, their youth, and associated disaffection, encourages them to adopt a more alternative participation repertoire. Their dissatisfaction with politics will be exacerbated by higher expectations of playing a more active role in politics and their being less reliant on voting for exerting influence. Meanwhile, the falling status attached to being non-university educated and the declining role of alternative politicising forces (Flanagan et al 2012), would find other young people retreating. Their preferred repertoire will demonstrate low interest in voting and little demand for alternative participation. My expectation is that:

H2: Young people are more likely than other, older electors to report a preference for non-voting repertoires of participation.

'Non-voting repertoires of participation' here refer to participation approaches in which the possibility of voting is low and/or relatively lower than the potential for pursuing other forms of action. Two more sub-hypotheses are attached to this:

H2a: The presence of HE experience, combined with youth, increases the likelihood of an alternative participation repertoire, when it encourages critical views yet high expectations.

H2b: The absence of HE experience, combined with youth, increases the likelihood of an inactive participation repertoire, when it encourages critical views and low expectations.

Through these hypotheses young people can be compared to other, older electors (individuals aged anything from 25 years upwards) to start understanding why as a whole they are less likely to vote and to privilege electoral participation. Building on these proposed variations in participation behaviours, however, this disaffected citizenry framework goes on to consider in more detail the nature and level of diversity among non-voting young people and the mechanisms through which education can be deemed responsible. My contribution to the field extends beyond simply introducing and developing the typological model for classifying groups of abstainers. Significantly, it is used to assess the relative merits of existing ‘unconventional’ explanations of how educational experiences affect participation attitudes and behaviours and so to consider how both HE and non-HE young people might be contributing to low youth turnout.

My ideal types suggest there are three principal manifestations of non-voting young people which emerge in response to distinct educational experiences. These reflect the theorised frustrated elector and engaged activist (both demonstrating a dissatisfied-disaffection) and the marginalised citizen (demonstrating alienated-disaffection) detailed in Chapter 2. To review:

- Young people who possess *previous higher education experience* are *more likely* to demonstrate tendencies (attitudinal and behavioural) towards the *frustrated elector*.
- Young people who are *on-course higher education students* are *more likely* to demonstrate tendencies (attitudinal and behavioural) towards the *engaged activist*.
- Young people who *lack higher education experience* are *more likely* to demonstrate tendencies (attitudinal and behavioural) towards the *marginalised citizen*.

All three types should demonstrate negative perceptions of the political system but vary in their expectations of politics and the role they themselves believe they should and can play in it. It is against these latter elements that their criticisms are judged and the type of disaffection established. For example, is it grounded in disappointment and dissatisfaction (allied with high expectations) or does it reflect a form of disaffection indicative of alienation (where there are low expectations)? As a general position, captured by H1 and H2, I contend that as young people become more critical of politics, they become less willing and likely to vote. This is thought to be true of all three non-voting disaffected citizenry types who should report more negative perceptions of politics than those who do vote. Again, there is proposed negative relationship between disaffection and turnout.

A key argument relating to the marginalised citizen is the importance of politicisation within social networks. Taking inspiration from the sorting model, young people who do not pursue HE are thought to under-value electoral participation because they do not experience sufficient political mobilisation within their network interactions. Their conversations with others tend to have a weaker political component. As such, they are neither especially willing to participate nor to vote on polling day itself. Their potential for abstaining is then thought to be strengthened by this distance from politicised individuals if and when it lowers their interest in politics, reduces their expectations (they see themselves as less capable when they do not enjoy social encouragement), and generates even more negative perceptions (the political world is viewed as removed and inaccessible). Combined these mechanisms, connected to relative education and social positioning, mitigate the possibility that the increased educational attainment of non-HE individuals will act to boost turnout. As a result, they are considered least likely of all young electors to vote. They encounter the fewest pro-voting influences.

H3: Young people without HE experience are the least likely electoral group to vote because they encounter weaker mobilisation in the form of politically engaged social networks.

H4: The exclusion from politically engaged social networks further reduces the turnout potential of young people without HE experience by encouraging disaffection in the form of alienation, characterised by low expectations and negative perceptions.

In contrast it can be assumed that many young people with HE experience are at least likely to support the principle of voting. They are located in networks which are thought both to encourage and recruit voters. However, as a further mechanism responsible for their abstention, I argue there is a lack of *partisan* mobilisation which in turn reinforces disaffection among frustrated electors. It leaves them dissatisfied by the wider operation of politics and feeling unable to identify with a party they can support within this. It is indicative of a more selective issue-based voting approach, also associated with a high-level of education, in which even if willing to vote they cannot overcome any negative opinions because there is no party which reflects their views.

H5: The negative effect of disaffection on turnout is minimised among young people with HE experience if and when they feel able to identify with a political party.

In the case of engaged activists this thinking is further extended. They become politicised through their social networks – to some extent matching the experiences of frustrated electors – and develop heightened expectations for political participation through peers' encouragement. They are also disaffected and struggle to find a party to vote for. However, they encounter additional opportunities for action outwith the electoral sphere with biographical freedom and campus support structures. Thus they replace voting with a more alternative repertoire of preferred activities.

H6: The negative impact of disaffection on turnout is exacerbated among young people with on-course HE experience through increased opportunities for alternative participation.

These hypotheses relating to the non-voting disaffected citizenry are summarised in Table 3.1 which identifies the kind of disaffection, key mechanisms, and associated ideal type. In addition, expectations surrounding a mobilised voter are presented where they find their networks and party attachments overcoming and/or weakening any disaffection.

Table 3.1: Hypothesised educational mechanisms for the disaffected citizenry in the youth population			
Education	Disaffection	Key mechanism(s)	Disaffected citizenry type
No HE experience	Low expectations Negative perceptions	Absence of politicised social networks	Marginalised citizen
HE experience (past and on-course)	High expectations Negative perceptions	Presence of politicised social networks Low partisanship	Frustrated elector
HE experience (on-course)	High expectations Negative perceptions	Presence of politicised social networks Low partisanship Alternative participation opportunities	Engaged activist
HE experience (past and on-course)	High expectations Perceptions both positive and negative	Presence of politicised social networks High partisanship	Mobilised voter

3.4. Independent variables

My theory is that disaffection attitudes are responsible for differential political participation, and that these attitudes emerge according to education and age, and are moderated principally through social network politicisation and party identification. The independent variables involved in the above hypotheses therefore fall into three categories and it is these which are to be tested throughout my modelling. The first, as the sequential approach of Campbell et al's funnel of causality (1960) would support, includes two key demographic character traits: age and individual educational experience. Age is indicative of life-cycle staging while also acting as a proxy for educational environment, in the absence of appropriate data for multilevel modelling (the youngest respondents entering the electorate at a time when the electorate is at its most educated). Next, there are disaffection attitudes, the intervening variables which are affected by age and education and impact upon voter turnout. Finally, there are variables corresponding with the proposed mechanisms. Much has already been said on the conceptualisation of these variables and further discussions of their operationalisation are included within the empirical chapters, with critical reflections on how they contribute to tests of the disaffected citizenry framework. This is because the selection and use of these variables – how they combine and interact – are intended to be a key contribution of the thesis. Given the use of multiple data sources, for clarity I

introduce the specific questions from which the data are gathered at the analysis stage (precise question wording and response options in Appendix A). Nevertheless, some introduction is necessary as these are used in specifying the model which will be seen and tested throughout the empirical chapters.

3.4.1. Age

Age features throughout the analysis in two roles. It can test the impact of factors unique to young people which might generate a particular form of disaffection and then influence how this next affects turnout. Simultaneously, it is a proxy for educational cohorts with suggestions that younger individuals experience their formative political years within a more educated society than will have been true of older electors. The age range most commonly for 'young people' – in the literature, youth participation policies, electoral segmentation, and opinion polls – is 18 to 24 years. Accordingly, I use this range to ensure my findings are comparable to existing research and more easily incorporated into the work of policy makers and practitioners. Importantly, however, it also means the majority of individuals labelled 'young' in the analysis are first-time eligible electors for any general election under study. There are consequently a number of start-up costs which are universally experienced, even if to a lesser or greater extent depending on education. In ordinary circumstances, an 18-24-year-old will have experienced two general elections at most and only towards the upper-end of the range.

Furthermore, the range is narrow enough that many respondents will still be in education and very few will have experienced multiple years in post-education 'adulthood'. If a wider range were adopted – such as up to the age of 29 years (for example, Martin 2012a) – it would be harder to control for socio-economic profiles which develop upon leaving education, entering the workforce, and pursuing careers. To what extent would educational advantages simply be proxies for socio-economic advantages achieved later in life (see Kam and Palmer 2008)? Similar concerns can relate to having children and leaving home as confounding variables (Highton and Wolfinger 2001). Evidently these are important when comparing across generations but when looking at variation among young people specifically and comparing them against the wider electorate, the narrower age bracket minimises the impact of varied experiences beyond education. To adopt a tighter age range, however, could miss many young people still in education, for example individuals who have undertaken gap years or are

completing four- or five-year degrees. Equally, from a statistical perspective, restricting the age range too much within national surveys can often impose constraints on the reliability of the chosen procedures if cell counts fall below sufficient levels.

When comparing young people with members of older generations it is unhelpful to contrast their attitudinal and behavioural responses only against wider electorate averages. There may be particular life stages (implied by age) at which notable changes emerge. Are young people as significantly different from those in an age group directly above them (25-34 years) as against individuals aged between 45-54 years? These groups are likely to be experiencing dissimilar life-cycle stages and represent different generations from the perspective of aggregate educational experience. Care must also be taken to compare young people not only against average figures but against those of a 25+ group which excludes the youth electorate. Throughout the thesis, when not using age as a scale-level variable in its purest form, for wider electorate analysis I use a seven-group age scale: 18-24 years, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, and 75 years or older. Clearly, these groupings are to some degree arbitrary and not heavily grounded in theory or studies which might suggest certain life-cycle stages typically occur within particular age ranges. However, as Smets demonstrates in her later maturation thesis, life-cycle stages are not static across generations (2012) nor across socio-demographic groups and communities. Any judgement here will always be context dependent. The aim is simply to ensure each group includes a sufficient number of cases for analysis and is internally similar enough in the number of electoral opportunities and educational environment members will have experienced.

3.4.2. Educational experience

Educational experience and status are variously defined and measured. For some, the number of years spent in education, an absolute indicator, is deemed most appropriate and as a scale-level measure is frequently employed for modelling. However, a major failing of this operationalisation is the absence of qualitative distinctions between types and levels of education (Kerckhoff et al 2002: 101). It sheds no light on where education was received (or is being received) or the type of qualification awarded (or being studied for). This presents a drawback for testing my framework in which educational context – both an individual's level and type of education, and the environment in which they are located – are of most interest. A numerical variable can imply 'more' or 'less' education

but ignores demographic and status differentiation of institutions (see Brennan and Osborne 2008). It cannot helpfully capture variation in experience.

Conversely, individuals' absolute qualifications may be used (Schneider 2007). This has the advantage of demonstrating more clearly where a qualification was awarded – for example, more academic HE or vocational further education (FE) – and at what level (for example, undergraduate or postgraduate). Operationalising educational experience in this way creates a bias, however, against individuals currently in the process of studying, namely young people. For Niemi and Hanmer, these individuals cannot be considered to be highly educated (2010: 303). This means, however, that a student at university would potentially rank the same as an individual who does not pursue HE, since they can only claim to have upper-level secondary qualifications. Tenn's assertion that simply entering an HE environment can boost turnout potential (2007) cannot be inferred, nor can thoughts about universities developing a more critical outlook, their positioning individuals in politicised networks, and providing opportunities for alternative participation (Crossley 2008; Van Dyke 1998).

For this research it is more appropriate to combine traditional measures with information from multiple survey questions. My interest is in educational experience, encapsulating the current educational status of an individual and the level at which this has been *and/or* is being pursued. In the total electorate, there is an HE versus non-HE distinction to be made. Focusing on environmental effects, this HE group should include on-course HE students, a group assumed to be already experiencing the politicisation associated with campus networks and informal learning. Within the youth population, additional variation between levels and types of education can, with the help of larger youth sample sizes and youth-specific questions, be disaggregated further. For example, is it post-compulsory schooling which can encourage an alternative participation repertoire or must it be specifically delivered within an HE institution to have such an effect? Could an FE experience, typically enjoying lower reputational status (Janmaat et al 2014; Persson 2012; Van de Werfhorst 2007; Hoskins et al 2016), be associated with a marginalised citizen or do additional years spent in education move these students towards a frustrated elector profile, at least willing to consider voting?

Techniques are available for comparing across educational systems. As will be explained below, I focus on the British case of Westminster general elections. Across this single

electorate there remain educational variations – for example, within Britain’s component nations – so I refer to standardised levels used already by practitioners for qualification comparisons (QAA 2014). Similar techniques are frequently used to make comparisons within educational research, for example the International Standard Classification of Education developed by the United Nations (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2015). These could be similarly applied when extending the research to a cross-country comparative project. By referring to the Quality Assurance Agency’s standards I can compare between vocational and academic qualifications and study the nations of Britain through a single scale (see Appendix A).

3.4.3. Disaffection: ‘to be explored’

When assessing disaffection and its two dimensions, I develop two components: *absolute* disaffection, based on perceptions and experiences, and *relative* disaffection, where these reflections on formal politics are judged against expectations. In the framework I present, the former includes attitudes on external efficacy and views surrounding political responsiveness looking at trust and confidence in political actors’ and institutions’ actions. The latter covers internal efficacy and ideals relating to representative democracy. This approach is inspired by Norris’s claim that ‘[i]t is rational and consistent for citizens to believe in democratic values but to remain critical about the way democratic governments actually work in practice, or to have confidence in political institutions but no faith in politicians’ (Norris 1999: 13). Where democratic values and internal efficacy are high and criticism also present, there is a democratic deficit or, in the language of my own model, dissatisfied-disaffection. Where they are low, I argue they combine with absolute disaffection to generate alienation as an alternative response.

There is therefore no single variable for operationalising disaffection. Instead, it requires reference to all these components. This in itself, the development of appropriate indicators and methods for establishing levels of disaffection is a key contribution of this thesis. In Chapter 5 I address this issue and present discussion of the elements and process involved in creating independent variable(s) to be used to explain voter turnout. I refer to a range of attitudinal indicators within the chosen data sources, the choice of datasets to some extent guided by the range of relevant survey questions available, looking at individuals’ views on the political regimes, institutions, and actors under

which they are governed, as well as their ideals for political community and democratic principles (see Norris 1999, 2003). Statistical techniques are then used to construct latent concepts which combine these measures in different ways, drawing on theory and analytical procedures to assess model fit. The aim is to establish first how we should think about participation attitudes before then going on to examine how we can use these to explain participation behaviours. For this reason, further specification of internal efficacy, external efficacy, ideals, and responsiveness features later within the empirical analysis and remains an area to be explored.¹⁴

This approach helps to establish greater internal validity. By viewing disaffection as a multifaceted phenomenon instead of using a single variable, such as democratic satisfaction, the findings can be more representative of the range of attitudes which comprise an individuals' overarching feelings towards the political system (Jackman 2008: 122). I refer to previous studies in the selection of the component attitudes which will inevitably create some bias based on my own reading of the literature and personal experiences of disaffection. Nevertheless, statistical techniques, such as exploratory factor analysis, can determine if and how certain variables should be grouped. Equally, by studying each indicator in isolation through initial descriptive statistics, patterns across these can be further confirmed. The reliability of the disaffection measure can also benefit from this process where there is consistency in responses reported. If respondents answer similarly across variables, it suggests comparable attitudes are being recorded and that these usefully combine to capture a single overarching concept. If the responses do not match, however, there is arguably an alternative contribution. One of my aims is to develop our current understanding of disaffection and how it can exist in different ways for different groups. Thus, identifying conventional components which theory would suggest exist concurrently but in reality do not seem to correlate, is in itself an important stage. Conversely, if only a single variable acts as an outlier, it may indicate a badly worded question which will need to be rethought before its use in further analysis and future surveys.

3.4.4. Mechanisms

As with disaffection, variables involved in testing the proposed mechanisms are presented in more detail during the model building of my empirical chapters. Again, the

¹⁴ Component variables detailed in Appendix C.

selection and development of these through statistical procedures is an important feature of the thesis itself. Nevertheless, two key elements are identified related to the four hypotheses designed to explain the emergence of specific types of non-voting disaffected young people: social networks and strength of party identification. These feature as controls throughout the analysis. In Chapter 7, following the development of repertoire variables, opportunities for alternative participation can also be included.

Social networks and a resultant interest in politics are especially key in aiming to distinguish between HE and non-HE young people. The framework assumes the higher likelihood of voting among HE young people and mitigation of disaffection for some individuals is, in large part, the result of socialisation processes and the increased likelihood of their interacting with politically informed and active individuals. This not only directly recruits and mobilises but raises their engagement with politics more generally. It also raises interest in alternative participation as well as the internal efficacy and ideals against which any political criticism is weighed. Ways of including this in the model include political discussions (McClurg 2003) and levels of political interest among immediate contacts and communities (Quintelier et al 2012). I adopt this approach in contrast with more traditional sorting model tests which focus on social connections (see Persson 2014). As I elaborate on in Chapter 7, this increases our confidence in claiming a politicisation effect – there is increased internal validity – and addresses the anti-youth bias which occurs when relying too heavily on professional occupations as indicators of social network centrality. My model prioritises the political nature of networks and the interactions.

Partisanship can be identified through a simple question of party identification, whether a survey respondent can choose one party above another they feel particularly connected to and would support in an election. Individuals who can identify a party to vote for are thought to be more likely voters since any disaffection with the political system will be mediated by support for at least some of its actors and, we might imagine, a belief that politics' operation can be improved by the actions of a particular party. This partisanship could also help to understand the engaged activist. It is anticipated that where there is no partisanship and yet alternative, non-electoral opportunities for action, some young people will feel more inclined to adopt an alternative participation repertoire. The specific party supported can add a further control when considering factors contributing to disaffection. An opposition party supporter may, for example, feel

more dissatisfied than an elector who supports a party of government. Controlling for this will be important when testing the initial assumptions upon which the new hypotheses are built.

Finally, for the engaged activist, as an initial mechanisms indicator, on-course student status can be abstracted from the original educational experience variable. Assumptions are attached to this status, namely that the individual is likely to have increased access to varied participation opportunities. Equally, their repertoire of participation – developed in Chapter 6 – and the extent to which they see alternative activities featuring in this will be suggestive of the opportunities they think they have. Unfortunately, given the specificity of student activism and a reliance in this research on election study surveys, more details on the nature of activities open to students and the extent to which this is true are likely to be difficult to collect. However, further information on the time young people have free to pursue alternative activities (political or otherwise) could also develop tests of this mechanism.

3.5. Case selection: UK Westminster general elections

The puzzle of participation was first introduced by Brody (1978) within an American context yet can be observed across Western industrialised democracies. Similarly, much of the work referred to in the preceding chapters on political participation and turnout has looked at experiences across and within multiple established democratic states. As the review by Smets and van Ham (2013) suggests, across these contexts studies tend to observe similar and consistent relationships between individual turnout and many of the variables under investigation here. Thus despite institutional variation which inevitably impacts on turnout choices, the puzzling nature of the paradoxical phenomena is, to a large extent, common in many countries. Esser and de Vreese, for example, find many of the same determinants affecting youth turnout operating in both the US and Europe, and in similar ways (2007). Equally, while many of the examples and evidence presented in Chapter 2 have referred to the UK, the framework itself has been designed with reference to theories and studies relating to a range of Western democracies. To develop the framework, I have chosen to pursue a single country case study. Specifically, the analysis concerns electors' attitudes and behaviours, and the mechanisms which explain these, in the context of UK general elections to the Westminster parliament.

Clearly, this places some limits on generalisability, these elections having their own unique features concerning party systems, electoral rules, and voting procedures. To imply findings can be immediately applied elsewhere without accounting for institutional characteristics and subsequent adaptation could risk erroneous conclusions. However, as Lijphart (1971) argues, single case studies make valuable contributions within the comparative method. Here I choose voting at UK general elections to test and refine my explanatory framework. In the first instance, there is an opportunity for theory-confirming and theory-infirming work (ibid: 692), using voting behaviour in this case to assess the relative strength of 'alternative' education effects theories within the disaffected citizenry framework. To what extent do the hypotheses and proposed causal mechanisms find support within this particular context? In the second, the research is designed with a hypothesis-generating rationale (ibid: 692), refining the theories and framework through statistical modelling to identify those relationships and mechanisms which appear most significant in our understanding of the participation puzzle. This allows the 'ideal' framework to be modified into something which can then be tested across a range of different institutional settings, an idea I return to in Chapter 8. Moreover, as an issue of practicality, the proposed mechanisms and disaffection indicators require data on a wide range of specific attitudes, behaviours, and characteristics which are not typically found in suitable cross-national datasets nor easily compared across national surveys.

A further advantage of such approach is its gaining insight into the attitudes and behaviours of young people in a country in which academic interest is mirrored by concern among policy makers and practitioners. A more detailed picture of the situation within a single country can benefit wider discussions and facilitate knowledge exchange.

3.5.1. United Kingdom or Great Britain?

The decision to concentrate initially on UK general elections has not only been taken due to practical considerations relating to my own background and interests as a researcher; I am a UK-national who has direct experience of the UK's education and political systems. It also relates to the scale of the youth participation puzzle in the UK in which trends appear to be especially pronounced, making it an interesting case in and of itself. From analysis of the British Election Study (BES), Whiteley reports that in 1974 as many as 72 per cent of respondents left school at 16 years of age, compared to just 29 per cent in

2005 (2012: 48). Equally, the proportion of individuals awarded degrees during this period grew in the BES by a factor of five (ibid: 48). There has also been a concerted effort by policy makers to prioritise educational opportunities for young people (Furlong and Cartmel 2007). Despite this, turnout has been falling, from a high of 83.9 per cent in the 1950 general election to a record low of 59.4 per cent in 2001. Even if then rising marginally in 2005, 2010 and 2015 we are yet to see it return to historical levels – turnout currently rests at 66.2 per cent (McGuinness et al 2012; Hawkins et al 2015). Within this, we know young people are some of the most educated and yet youth turnout is low, falling, and rests at some of the lowest rates internationally (Fieldhouse et al 2007).

Moreover, there is an element of institutional control. As will be shown in Chapter 4, the notable point at which turnout, and youth turnout in particular, has fallen in the post-war period was in the late 1990s and early 2000s. As Evans suggests, there have not been any formal institutional changes of sufficient size in UK politics during this period which could explain such observations (2003: 84). Indeed, while there has been a large amount of constitutional change, including the creation of devolved assemblies, introduction of local mayors, and reform to the House of Lords, general election procedures have remained largely unaltered. Furthermore, recent innovations have seen voting become seemingly easier with longer opening hours at polling stations and postal voting, for example (Electoral Commission 2002: 19). These would not be expected to introduce new deterrents to turning out, rather quite the opposite. It is therefore debateable whether historical changes in institutional context have contributed to the negative over-time trends in turnout behaviour.

Alongside this, despite the growing interest among scholars in youth politics, the theories of critical citizens, repertoire replacement, and sorting model are relatively under-explored in a UK context and with specific regards to young people. They are often cited and yet not wholly tested or compared. There is a gap within the literature here which presents opportunities to examine the extent to which any of these ideas can be refined and applied within such a setting to explain a youth participation puzzle.

Notwithstanding parallels, electors in the UK do not encounter wholly alike political contexts, however. Institutional structures must still be recognised. For example, there are different political systems and HE arrangements across the four nations where there

is devolution; Scottish undergraduate degrees typically take four years and are free for Scottish students, as opposed to three years and fee-funded in the rest of the UK, perhaps changing the demographic profile and experiences of the student population. Furthermore, the independently elected Scottish Parliament has ultimate authority over many Scottish policy areas. This may encourage additional differential experiences with individuals developing political attitudes and behaviours specific to their own national context and political culture. At what governance level, for instance, is an individual's assessment of politicians' responsiveness judged? Not discrediting the need to acknowledge variation I would still suggest, however, many of the UK's educational and political structures are comparable. It is not uncommon for electoral behaviour research to focus simultaneously on multiple UK nations, the British Election Study a prime example (Scarborough 2000).

We can assume many shared experiences. This is particularly true of Westminster general elections. There has been relative consistency up to and including 2010 in the same main parties – those with the potential of forming a government – competing in each constituency (excepting Northern Ireland). Plaid Cymru and the Scottish National Party in Wales and Scotland, respectively, are coming to play increasingly prominent roles in politics. Yet, within the context of Westminster general elections on which we can currently access post-election data,¹⁵ these would arguably be considered minority parties. The electoral system of first-past-the-post and other electoral rules also apply universally across all four component nations at these times. Further similarities between the four nations are seen in education. The National Union of Students is present in all four (NUS 2012) and leads numerous UK-wide campaigns, including Vote for Students in 2010 which was directly targeted at increasing student voter registration (NUS 2010). These university-based politicisation forces can be assumed to operate across the UK in a similar fashion. Students themselves also frequently travel within the UK to study (UCAS 2012) and can vote either at home or at a term-time address, so it becomes more difficult to isolate specific national groups. An initial UK focus does not appear inappropriate.

However, I exclude Northern Ireland from the analysis. Northern Ireland has a more unique history and culture, and electors' experiences are likely to be much different from

¹⁵ Therefore, excluding 2015 Westminster general election.

those in England, Scotland, and Wales, even at general elections. As Moran states, it has an atypical political history which continues to shape its current politics (2011: 208). Party competition, for instance, has long been distinct in Northern Ireland where leading parties competing within each constituency are not those likely to form a government in Westminster, including Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party. While there is evidence today of two- or three-party politics weakening in England, Scotland, and Wales, disparities across these nations have historically been less marked. Partisan loyalties also tend to exert influence to a greater degree in Northern Ireland given historical and religious associations, suggesting sociological explanations may have more relevance here. This would undermine some of the ideas within my theoretical approach which emphasises individual agency.

Additionally, and pertinent to this research, individual electoral registration was introduced in 2002, much earlier than elsewhere and under different rules to those recently introduced throughout the rest of the UK. There are suggestions this negatively impacted on the size and representativeness of the electorate (Electoral Commission 2012). Recent elections have also seen turnout in Northern Ireland demonstrate alternative patterns. For example, turnout fell between 2005 and 2010 by 5.3 per cent whereas in Britain turnout rose by 4.0 per cent. In 2010 the final turnout figure was almost eight percentage points lower (Rallings and Thrasher 2010: 5). Any observed patterns of lower turnout or of a more extreme decline would therefore need to control for this variation. Institutional and social differences arguably make Northern Ireland an incomparable case, justifying my focus on Great Britain only.

3.6. Data collection

I have decided to utilise secondary data since high quality survey datasets containing information on political behaviour in Britain, collected by established and peer-reviewed academic research teams, are both widely available and easily accessible. This is a logical choice given the wealth of data already collected, something which individually is costly to do, both financially and in time, and typically involves compromises on questionnaire length, sample size, and sampling when resources are limited (Seale 2004: 356; Dale et al 1988: 45). Large and representative samples are important in the pursuit of external validity which increases the potential for generalising across the British population (see Drost 2011: 120-1). An over-reliance on too few cases undermines this principle.

Crucially, however, no single survey will likely cover all the issues of interest to a new research project. Secondary surveys will originally have been designed with their researchers' own interests and priorities which influence the topics, question wording, and item response options. There remains potential for researcher bias even in these methods often deemed to be objective and fact-collecting. However, it is not unusual to utilise existing survey data in this kind of research and with a range of applicable datasets available, it has been possible to identify several which closely reflect the interests of my own research project. Firstly, certain requirements must be met by the datasets.

1. The sample size of each must be large enough (and with national coverage for England, Scotland, and Wales) to generalise findings to the population from which the sample is drawn and permit sophisticated statistical methods. A larger sample size can minimise the likelihood of committing a Type-II error and increase the statistical power of any tests, being more sensitive to small effects. A minimum of 1,000 respondents, a commonly accepted number in survey research, is therefore targeted (Baruch 1999: 429-30). Additionally, there must be a sufficient number of cases for each group of interest, Sapsford suggesting approximately 100 cases (2007: 92).
2. The datasets must all include relevant demographic information, particularly on age – either through actual age or date of birth – and education, covering individuals' current educational/occupational status and the level of their highest educational qualification. These latter two educational measures, as discussed, can be combined to create the educational experience variable my research hypotheses require. Wider demographic information, including gender, ethnicity, and social class, is also important to support the internal validity of any modelling procedures. If using these as control variables, by comparing associations and model fit statistics, I can feel more confident that the relationships within my own proposed causal paths are not spurious. If relationships remain the same or similar when such controls are included, it is easier to attribute any outcome to their influence; the independent variables appear to be capturing what they are designed to measure. Additionally, a wide range of attitudinal level variables is needed to support the development and

testing of disaffected citizenry attitudes and preferences for the subsequent typology.

3. To test specific assumptions of repertoire replacement and situate turnout behaviours within repertoires of participation potential, further information on alternative participation is required. This should not only look at past behaviours but willingness towards future activity. For the purposes of this research, 'alternative participation' refers to 'action by ordinary citizens directed toward influencing some political outcomes' (Brady 1999: 737). The conceptual distinction is subsequently made between electoral participation, that which is solely concerned with voting and turnout, and alternative participation, by which is meant any political activity occurring outwith elections but which shares a similar objective to voting in that it aims at affecting politics. As large a number as possible must be sought to ensure activities relevant to all age groups are covered, the activities more popular among young people being traditionally overlooked (Martin 2012a: 223-4; O'Toole et al 2003).
4. Where a cross-sectional research design is applied my focus will principally be on participation at and around the time of the most recent UK general election in May 2010. Here data are widely available. The dataset(s) must include turnout data for which there is date (the 2010 general election) with data collection having been conducted shortly after the event itself. Concerns regarding memory recall can be minimised where fieldwork has followed the election relatively quickly (Lewis-Beck et al 2008: 88-9). Moreover, this will maximise the number of young respondents who will have been eligible to vote at the election.

In meeting these requirements, I rely solely on academic surveys. While some bias will always be present, each survey has also enjoyed rigorous processes of piloting, question development, and expert consultation. Detailed documentation is also provided when the data are deposited, which supports selection of relevant variables and understanding of the nature – and possible implications – of the sample and data collection methods. The sources themselves are therefore relatively reliable while the questions attached to each variable already assessed for their own internal validity (Pierce 2008: 83-4).

Further advantages come from using multiple datasets where alternative combinations for operationalising the same concepts can be found. This will help demonstrate the extent to which patterns across the concepts proposed in my framework are consistent and likely to exist in the wider population (Hancké 2009: 90-1). Recognition must be given, however, to variation in the mode of questioning, question wording, and response options when trying to compare across surveys. While every effort is made to ensure comparability, the survey instrument is not the same in all cases. This issue can emerge *within* a single survey too, for example if individuals answer using a mixture of Likert and semantic scale response options. The option of a middle ‘either/or’ category on some variables – as opposed to forcing respondents to take a side – may skew results even after standardising scales between 0 and 1. However, often the impact on responses of such issues is fairly random, being influenced not only by the survey instrument but by respondents’ own mood and character during fieldwork (Thyer 2001: 60). A range of question-wording can also help reliability tests. For example, using both positive and negative statements can highlight cases of acquiescence effects (ibid: 64). These exist where individuals demonstrate consistent agreement with statements to meet perceived cultural norms without appreciating variation in content. If this effect is not evident in the responses – if there is also greater construct validity, where there is an inverse correlation between positive and negative statements (Jackman 2008) – the selection of the variables and data is further justified.

3.6.1. British Election Study (February 1974 - 2010) – (BES)

The British Election Study, first conducted in 1963, is an established dataset available in Britain for studying voting behaviour. While not without critics (see Scarbrough 2000 discussion), it provides information on individuals’ vote and wider participation alongside standard demographic data and several attitudinal political engagement indicators, thus providing information on a range of the issues upon which this research is centred. It is also conducted on a national scale, with the exception of Northern Ireland, so permits analysis at the British level. Notably for this thesis it was the main British data source featured in Martin’s cross-country comparative-longitudinal study of youth participation (2012b: 145-5). It has also been used in cross-sectional research designs in this field, for example Furlong and Cartmel’s work using the 2010 BES to explore young people’s political engagement (2012) and Pattie and Johnston’s study on the influence of social context on participation, electoral and alternative (2013: 180). There is therefore

precedent for using it in studies of this nature which in turn presents further opportunity for comparing the findings of new analysis with work in the field.

Through the UK Data Archive all cross-sectional BES datasets for the general elections held since (and including) the February 1974 election (until, at time of analysis, 2010) can be freely downloaded online providing information across ten separate data points.¹⁶ Data from 1970 and earlier are not available in a downloadable SPSS data file and would require additional time to prepare it for analysis. Given ten successive election studies, however, are available from which to glean information, starting from 1974 is unlikely to limit the scope of the analysis. The majority of the work I present is also cross-sectional and focused on the 2010 general election so does not require a longer historical perspective. Moreover, it is possible that the 1970 election, being the first at which 18 to 20 year olds could vote might be exceptional in its youth turnout rates with greater awareness of the widening of the franchise potentially boosting their vote. Prior to this, the youth electorate is not comparable and would refer only to 21-24 year olds. The ten studies also still ensure coverage over the period in which HE expansion has been most noteworthy. Where in more recent surveys there have been additional components, for example pre-campaign surveys, self-completion online questionnaires, and panel-based studies, it is the post-campaign cross-sectional face-to-face responses I use to ensure comparability. It is also only through these surveys that actual turnout data can be found and where greater sampling control has been exercised to collect random probability samples.

3.6.2. British Participation Survey (2011) – (BPS)

The British Participation Survey 2011 (BPS) (Webb 2012) collected data from electors across Britain in July 2011, just over a year after the 2010 general election, through an online, self-completion questionnaire (n=1,353). Funded by the British Council, the polling agency YouGov was commissioned to conduct the survey and did so using its own YouGov panel respondents and quota sampling (Webb 2013). With Webb's specific interest being in dissatisfied and stealth democrats (2013), concepts which are in a similar field to my own work, the dataset includes a wide range of attitudinal variables applicable to this research and from which concepts of efficacy, responsiveness, and trust

¹⁶ Alt et al (no date), Clarke et al (2003, 2006), Crewe et al (no date a, no date b), Heath et al (no date, 1993a), Heath et al (1993b), Heath et al (1999), Whiteley and Sanders (2014).

can be measured and developed. Equally, appropriate age and education data is available as is information on respondents' views on a relatively large selection of alternative participation activities, recorded both as their past behaviour and their willingness to participate. This is in contrast to the more well-known and established survey of the BES, where attitudinal and participation questions even in 2010 are limited and allow for less nuanced conceptualisation and operationalisation for the disaffected citizenry framework.

3.6.3. Citizens in Transition Survey (2011) – (CITS)

As part of the Citizens in Transition Study (CITS) (Whiteley et al 2013) a survey of 18 to 25 year olds was conducted online to investigate young people's attitudes and behaviours on a range of topics linked to a broad concept of civic engagement. This included their political views, media usage, citizenship learning, engagement with and views of their communities, and their perceptions of 'citizenship' (Sturman et al 2012: 2-3; see also Whiteley 2014). Responses to this online component included participants from across the UK (the nine Northern Irish respondents have been excluded from the sample). Similarly, to mitigate the non-voting bias created by those who would have been ineligible to vote in the 2010 general election, individuals' date of birth information has been used to eliminate the very youngest members of the sample. This involved using month and year of birth to exclude individuals born any time from June 1992 onwards – aged under 18 at the time of the election – as well as individuals born prior to May 1985, who fall outwith the '18-24 years' definition of youth adopted in this research. Clearly, without more precise information it is not possible to be wholly confident individuals born in May in either of these years will meet my age criteria. However, in order to maximise the sample size and given the *possible* electoral eligibility for these respondents, those born in May 1992 and May 1985 are included.¹⁷ The final sample size is 1754 with 865 respondents from England, 448 from Scotland, and 441 from Wales.

Unlike many electorate-wide surveys the major advantage of the dataset is its youth focus providing both a larger youth sample and a wider array of youth-specific variables, relating to characteristics and life experiences. This is particularly evident in measures of educational status which cover FE institutions, non-HE training courses, applying for

¹⁷ Where age is referred to during the analysis for CITS respondents it refers to age at the time of the 2010 general election.

courses, and apprenticeships. With a larger HE student sample postgraduate and undergraduate students can also be discussed separately. This additional information permits more detailed analysis of education effects and the variation not only between students and non-students but between types of student across different educational institutions. Socio-economic status data also becomes available through information on respondents' parents to provide insight into young people's social background, opportunities, and likely early socialisation processes (see Currie et al 2008: 1430). In population-wide studies, this information for young people is often harder to determine since most adults will have occupations and incomes against which social class can be better judged while young people do not. The CITS also includes information on a range of participation activities including those which are perhaps considered more youth-oriented, for example starting a Twitter campaign about a political issue, and as with the BPS, both potential and actual participation are recorded. In addition, information is available on variables relevant for testing the mechanisms proposed in Table 3.1. Simultaneously, however, many of the survey questions were explicitly modelled on the original 2010 BES survey suggesting many questions will have benefitted from further piloting and pre-testing (Sturman et al 2012: 18).

3.6.4. Quota sampling

Both the BPS and CITS which form the primary cross-sectional data sources for this thesis, have been compiled online and with quota sampling. This can limit the extent to which inferential techniques are confidently applied (Gschwend 2005: 89; Fowler 2009: 46; Schofield 2006: 36-7). There is no guarantee of randomness while there is an increased likelihood of self-selection bias. This has implications for external validity, since it is only with randomised sampling that we can infer ideas about the wider population from the sample's characteristics. Generalisability is, to a degree, compromised. However, research in the field of political participation suggests internet quota samples often compare favourably with those collected through in-person interviews and probability sampling (Sanders et al 2007; Sapsford 2007; see Webb 2013: 751-2). It should not prevent robust analysis as long as one remains aware of these limitations and is careful to present results with such considerations in mind. Convention also suggests sampling error estimates and significance tests remain helpful in assessing relationships between variables within quota samples themselves, so should still be reported and assessed (Sapsford 2007: 90; Berinsky 2006: 518). Equally, steps can and

will be taken to increase confidence in results' representativeness by comparing respondents against available population statistics (Sapsford 2007: 98; Gschwend 2005: 90). Such techniques are used to ensure certain groups are not over-represented where they would be believed to create a bias (see Appendix B).

3.7. Data analysis

3.7.1. An evidentiary approach to mechanism testing

As alluded to by the discussion of secondary surveys and their forming the main data source for the empirical analysis, this research adopts a quantitative methodological approach. It is inspired by Nash's scientific realism (2005). There are certainly elements of the social or critical realist approach in the argument I am building. The proposed framework looks at how individual's decision-making and turnout is impacted on by a combination of their own characteristics and circumstances as well as associated social forces exerted on them, within any particular educational and political environment. Abstention can be the final 'output' in the case of many individuals and similarly, disaffection can be present in each of these instances to some degree. I have argued, however, that the processes through which individuals come to feel disaffected and then behave at an election are determined by their own unique educational experiences. Accordingly, there is no intention to uncover a single cause-effect relationship. Moreover, in using a case study approach, I am conscious that any relationships observed in the British youth electorate will need to be understood within the context of its electoral institutions, the circumstances surrounding any given election, and the nature and level of the educational environment. In this way, Pawson and Tilley's claim that 'outcomes are explained by the action of particular mechanisms in particular contexts [...]' (1997: 59) seems relevant.

Even with an apparent commitment to methodological plurality some authors within the tradition are often quick to dismiss social survey data and statistical techniques (Sayer 2000: 22; Pawson and Tilley 1997: 69). I would argue, however, that these methods, more commonly associated with a positivist or empiricist position, can add significantly to our understanding of the mechanisms involved in generating youth disaffection and youth turnout/abstention. A more deductive approach offers an important way of establishing the likelihood that any of the hypothesised non-voting disaffected citizenry

types exist and with what prevalence. Equally, it assesses the moderating role of intervening variables, such as social network politicisation, to establish likely mechanisms in operation. Any supporting 'evidence' emerging during the research process can be considered indicative of an active mechanism. If there is no suggestion it is operating within the case under investigation, it implies that even if still a possibility it is less helpful for understanding a phenomenon in that specific context. For example, if no group displays attitudes and behaviours associated with a participation trade-off it not only suggests the engaged activist is unlikely to be a major contributor to low youth turnout but also that as yet in Britain, there is little evidence of repertoire replacement anywhere. If education is connected to low turnout through disaffection, it is not necessarily because individuals are rejecting voting to pursue alternative activities. Quantitative techniques are used in this way very effectively as evidentiary tools (Nash 2005: 195). Kemp and Holmwood make the case that:

'While it is correct to point out that statistically derived regularities cannot, by themselves, establish a causal link, it is also important to acknowledge that the search for such patterns can be an important part of the process of identifying causes operating in the social world.' (2003: 179)

This encapsulates the analytical approach adopted within this thesis and the framing of my hypotheses. I remain interested in the interaction between mechanisms and context, and the varied processes these involve in determining an individual's electoral turnout. Nevertheless, I use statistical methods to 'enhance realist explanatory narratives' (Nash 2005: 186). I study several potential mechanisms (and associated types) to establish the ways in which education effects most commonly act, how they differ across electoral groups, and with what strength and significance. Having now established my intention to use quantitative data and statistical methods to assess the extent to which evidence can support the relationships, typologies, and mechanisms proposed, a variety of techniques are available. This next section details the data analysis tools I have chosen to employ as being most helpful to answer the research questions and bring new insights.

3.7.2. Longitudinal versus cross-sectional analysis

In the absence of a satisfactory longitudinal dataset including a sufficient range of consistent attitudinal and wider participation variables, much of my study adopts a cross-sectional design. It is only in the one-off cross-sectional surveys of the BPS and CITS, as will become evident, that suitable and relevant demographic, attitudinal, and

behavioural data is currently available for testing my hypotheses. The puzzle of participation undoubtedly comes to light, however, with reference to historical trends. I address this in Chapters 4 and 5 yet due to data availability limitations, the trend analysis I present employs predominantly descriptive statistical methods. I use the series of cross-sectional BES surveys discussed above and used already, running basic frequencies, crosstabs, and summary statistics which can track changes over time with chi-square and binomial tests of deviance. I then match these against trends in electoral behaviour and educational expansion. Thus there is an observational element to this section of the analysis.

The majority of the analysis is cross-sectional. This is not problematic despite the puzzle and a number of the component theories within my framework often having included longitudinal components (for example, Norris 2003, 2011; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Nie et al 1996; Campbell 2009; Persson 2011). An understanding of the current situation can add significantly to ideas about why youth turnout is lower than average and provide evidence suggestive of the mechanisms proposed within these longitudinal studies. Thus it can be incorporated into existing debates. The impact of educational expansion can still be inferred where there is reason to put faith in existing theories and also where any relevant electors are found to be especially sizable in the youth population. As Persson states when discussing the sorting model, something traditionally explored through longitudinal data, cross-sectional studies are important for examining causal mechanisms (2014: 726). Similarly, Campbell argues that while trend analysis is vital for thinking about the participation puzzle, cross-sectional analysis 'illuminate[s] the causal mechanisms linking educational environment and engagement' (2009: 772). It permits the development of a typology and explanations for existing patterns of participation. Inferences of this kind are arguably not perfect yet play an important role in highlighting further those concepts which are important in determining turnout. Through doing so they also draw our attention to the issues which will be important to include in future longitudinal and panel studies to develop tests on the role of disaffection and education on turnout over time and across generations.

3.7.3. Data weighting

Weighting is a process by which a sample can be made to appear more representative of the population and reduce any imbalance in sample characteristics expected to create a

sample bias (Dorofeev and Grant 2006: 45-79). With the sampling across the surveys used in this thesis and their methods of data collection varying, it is also important to ensure an element of standardisation. Weighting works by assigning greater emphasis on the responses of under-sampled groups, 'proportional to the relative contribution that respondent's information is to make to the final estimate' (ibid: 45). This process can extend to include a wide range of characteristics where particular groups appear to be more or less prevalent in the sample than in the wider population, so could distort the overall results of any analysis. As highlighted, a particular issue frequently arising in political participation research is that of turnout over-reporting when a self-report figure is used. Respondents are expected in some instances to make false statements if they are influenced by social desirability effects and already, by virtue of responding positively to a request for their participation in the research, be more politically engaged and likely to vote. In order to account for this, unless stated otherwise, the analysis which follows is consistently weighted with reference to official turnout at that the time of each corresponding general election. In this way, the representation of non-voters within the analysis is boosted. For the CITS, to ensure the weighting is more appropriate for young people the data are weighted using the 44 per cent youth turnout estimate for 2010 (Ipsos-MORI 2010).¹⁸

I have chosen, however, not to extend the weighting procedure to other demographic characteristics. While I would like to limit the influence of self-report bias, I want to keep the data in its original format as much as is then possible. This is particularly due to my decision to use structural equation models using IBM SPSS Amos 21 when testing causal mechanisms within the CITS. This requires data to be unweighted. I wish to minimise variation between the results of that analysis and the modelling which precedes it. Often, researchers use demographic characteristics when weighting their data to ensure the over-presence of particular groups in a sample does not distort the effects recorded for certain variables. However, given two of these – age and education – are in this research my independent variables of interest, this is less problematic. Further demographics, such as gender and ethnicity, can also be included as variables themselves to control for possible variation. The demographic composition of the samples, relative to census data, further helps build confidence in these weighting decisions (Appendix B).

¹⁸ Ipsos-MORI youth turnout estimates frequently employed throughout recent literature (e.g. Sloam 2007; Henn and Foard 2012; Berry 2014a; Birch et al 2013).

3.7.4. Multiple linear and logistic regression

The vast majority of analysis presented in this thesis has been conducted using IBM SPSS 21, a statistics software package which permits a wide range of descriptive and inferential techniques relevant to this research. In addition to more basic frequencies, crosstabs, and measures of association, I make particular use of multiple linear (ordinary least squares) regression and binary logistic regression. With my ultimate dependent variable being turnout in 2010 – a binary variable – logistic regression offers the opportunity to test the variable impact of different indicators, both as independent covariates and controls, on the likelihood of an individual having voted. The results are presented by log odds, used to predict probabilities. The logistic regression equation [Probability of a case = $e^{a+bX}/1+e^{a+bX}$] allows me to assess the likelihood an individual voted when they are defined by numerous characteristics, both as a result of demographic features and political attitudes. Additionally, interaction effects can be easily incorporated into any model and plotted. This is important if and where the impact of the predictor variables, for example those relating to disaffection, are anticipated to vary across groups in the extent to which and how they affect individual turnout. Multinomial logistic regression – for dependent variables with multiple outcome categories – can similarly be used to explore factors influencing adoption of particular repertoire types.

I also use ordinary least squares regression, however, when considering those factors responsible for disaffection attitudes. As I describe and explain in more detail in Chapter 5, I devise scales of disaffection, tested using Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics and designed to match my theoretical expectations. In order to see whether disaffection is more prevalent among young people, this kind of regression can predict the unit increase or decrease associated with a particular characteristic or response and, when combined within the linear regression equation [$y = a + b_1x_1 + \dots b_nx_n + \epsilon$], calculate the overall score for an individual when we have knowledge of their responses on all the featured variables. There are various assumptions which must be met, including tests for heteroscedasticity and multicollinearity, to confirm the robustness of the analysis. These are detailed alongside the analysis where appropriate.

During interpretation of results, issues of statistical power are important. Findings should be assessed with caveats relating to effect and sample size. Where samples are

sufficiently large enough, we can be more confident in observing effects within the data. At no point do the samples appear so small as to risk Type-I errors, being typically between 1,000 and 2,000 respondents. As I progress through the thesis, however, I conduct analysis on survey sub-samples in the CITS, thereby decreasing sample size and to some degree, the statistical power. There is an increased chance of accepting a false null hypothesis and we must remain wary of this possibility. Such an issue is difficult to overcome in this thesis, with its utilisation of secondary data, and yet the research remains informative and contributes to the design of future survey research on these topics where a larger sample can be sought.

3.7.5. Latent class analysis

Latent class analysis (LCA) offers an opportunity to develop the analysis of citizen types both in identifying differences between young people in their attitudes and behaviours and establishing those factors – specifically relating to education – which appear to lead them to adopt these. One of my principal interests is in observing some of the most common combinations of attitudes and behavioural preferences, the outcomes they produce, and how we can explain them. Thinking about types of young disaffected non-voters – frustrated, activist, and marginalised – and that of the mobilised voter, the aim is to identify different types of electors which resemble these theoretical concepts, assess their prevalence, and establish some of the processes and characteristics – notably those associated with educational experiences – which determine the adoption of each approach to politics. Unlike a factor analysis, the latent variables are assumed to be categorical and as such considered as distinct groups. LCA is therefore frequently employed in typology development, used to distinguish between ideal types which encapsulate the most likely combinations of responses amongst survey participants (Hagenaars and Halman 1989; McCutcheon 1987; Magidson and Vermunt 2004; Vermunt 2010). It offers opportunities here.

It is a method akin to cluster analysis although benefits from fewer restrictions and the ability to include categorical variables. A further benefit distinguishing it from traditional K-means clustering is its providing diagnostic tools which can specify the number of groups upon which the analysis should build, alerting researchers to where any proposed distinctions may have been overstated or, alternatively, where additional groupings may have been overlooked. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 6, I principally

use the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) statistic and change in the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic to determine the most parsimonious model (see Magidson and Vermunt 2004: 176-7). The latent class analysis uses the datasets from SPSS files within Latent GOLD 5.0.

Despite being relatively new to political science, recent studies point to its growing popularity in political participation research. The technique has been used to consider participation repertoires (Oser et al 2013; Hustinx et al 2012; Oser and Hooghe 2013), citizenship norms (Hooghe et al 2014), and elector types (Shryane et al 2006) suggesting it is applicable within this study. Significantly, it 'accommodates interactions of observed variables because different clusters can be similar with respect to certain variables but different with respect to others' (Shryane et al 2006: 9). It does not require groups to be unique in all respects, a fact which is also helpful in this research in which some attitudes might be similar - a high level of absolute disaffection, for example, expected across all members of the disaffected citizenry - while others vary, such as the expectations against which this is judged. Thus as Oser et al state when applying this as a tool for political participation research, it 'opens up an analytical window into the distinctive ways in which subgroups of the population are combining [...] acts of participation in their individual-level repertoires' (2013: 94).

The classes which emerge can be used as dependent variables within a multinomial or logistic regression to consider the factors affecting the likelihood of mirroring a particular citizen type (Magidson and Vermunt 2004: 192; Oser et al 2013: 97-8; Hustinx et al 2012: 107-9). For example, both age and educational experience can be used identified to understand what likely leads an individual to adopt a particular approach to electoral participation. Does being a certain type of student or young person increase the probability of demonstrating an approach in which abstention is more probable, and what defines this approach? Crucially, it must be understood that LCA does not allow for direct theory-testing. It cannot, for example, test proposed causal relationships. Instead, it is used here in an exploratory capacity and to gather 'evidence' which can inform our thinking and support (or challenge) the mechanisms being tested throughout the rest of the thesis. It can identify likely types of political character and explore how and to what extent these might exist within the wider population. For example, evidence which suggests a proposed non-voter type is uncommon helps us to think about the strength and relevance of the theories from which it stems. If no class demonstrates a very high

level of alternative participation potential alongside a very low commitment to electoral participation, questions emerge over the applicability of repertoire replacement theory and its usefulness when re-examining the participation puzzle.

3.7.6. Structural equation modelling

The final main statistical technique I use is structural equation modelling (SEM), conducted here using IBM SPSS Amos 21. SEM is of benefit to the research enquiries through its ability to model causal-like paths, testing both direct and indirect effects of variables and allowing us to observe how the impact of particular characteristics or experiences associated with the individual might be moderated by other variables. For example, what is it about education that leads to a particular outcome? Does it act through particular processes? The paths are 'causal-like' in that true causation can never be proved by statistical techniques and it would be incorrect to suggest a significant path between variables in an SEM represents an irrefutable cause. It is nevertheless a confirmatory method through which the hypothesised relationships, including the proposed direction of any effect, can be tested (Ullman 2007: 679-82). With the support of theory, a necessary precursor to devising a model for testing (Klem 2000: 239) it can be a valuable tool within the scientific realist tradition (Pratschke 2003).

An assumption of linearity (Loehlin 2004; Kühnel 1998: 58) and restrictions within the statistical software requires the dependent variable to be an interval in measurement, meaning SEM is not appropriate for my ultimate area of interest, individuals' turnout. However, as will be explained in Chapter 7, interval-level measures created during the analysis through exploratory factor analysis which summarise participation preference scores (Chapter 6) can be used here. These then provide additional understanding of my proposed mechanisms when applied within an SEM.

3.8. Structure for empirical analysis

The empirical chapters which now follow take their direction from the hypotheses listed above. Initially, in Chapter 4, however, I use BES data to present in more detail the existence of the youth participation puzzle in Britain. This demonstrates why it makes a suitable case study for testing my proposed framework and provides context to the discussions which follow, tracking electoral turnout patterns over time across age and education groups. In Chapter 5 I address the leading hypothesis of the thesis, that young

people can be regarded to a greater extent as being a non-voting disaffected citizenry. I begin by developing the work of Chapter 4 with the BES to consider how disaffection attitudes have also changed over time, as turnout has fallen and education risen. I then move to devising new disaffection indicators, based on both absolute and relative conceptions, and associated with dissatisfied and alienated forms proposed in my model. This analysis, as is true for the remainder of the thesis, is based in and around the 2010 UK general election, and draws on responses to the BPS for wider electorate analysis and CITS for within-youth electorate tests. The disaffection indicators are developed and used first to assess the determinants of particular attitudes – including the extent to which younger, more educated generations are more critical of politics – before being applied as independent variables involved in individual's turnout decisions. I use interaction terms to compare the impact of disaffection attitudes across groups and assess how different types of disaffection affect voting behaviour in unique ways (*H1*).

In Chapter 6, I extend these discussions to an examination of how particular attitude and turnout combinations correspond with distinct repertoires of political participation, using LCA. These are presented within a typology of elector types which categorises the British electorate (and later, the youth electorate) into classes of participation preferences. These are used to provide evidence suggestive of the proposed mechanisms while also indicating the prevalence of particular approaches to participation – their contribution to low turnout – and how these reflect different attitude patterns. During this, I test *H2* and its component parts with the view that young people will display a greater tendency towards non-voting repertoires of activity. They are assumed to be not only less likely to vote but also less likely to view voting as a possibility or to prioritise this as the best way of exerting influence.

Results regarding the repertoires of a non-voting youth (found within the CITS) then form the foundations of Chapter 7. Here, I specifically test the incidence and operation of the educational mechanisms proposed in hypotheses 3 to 6 among young people. This combines regression and SEM techniques to test why young people develop particular forms of non-voting behaviour. Finally, in Chapter 8, I explore how my original non-voting disaffected citizenry framework can be refined, what more it can tell us about young people's abstention beyond its initial assumptions, and how it might be applied within new institutional settings.

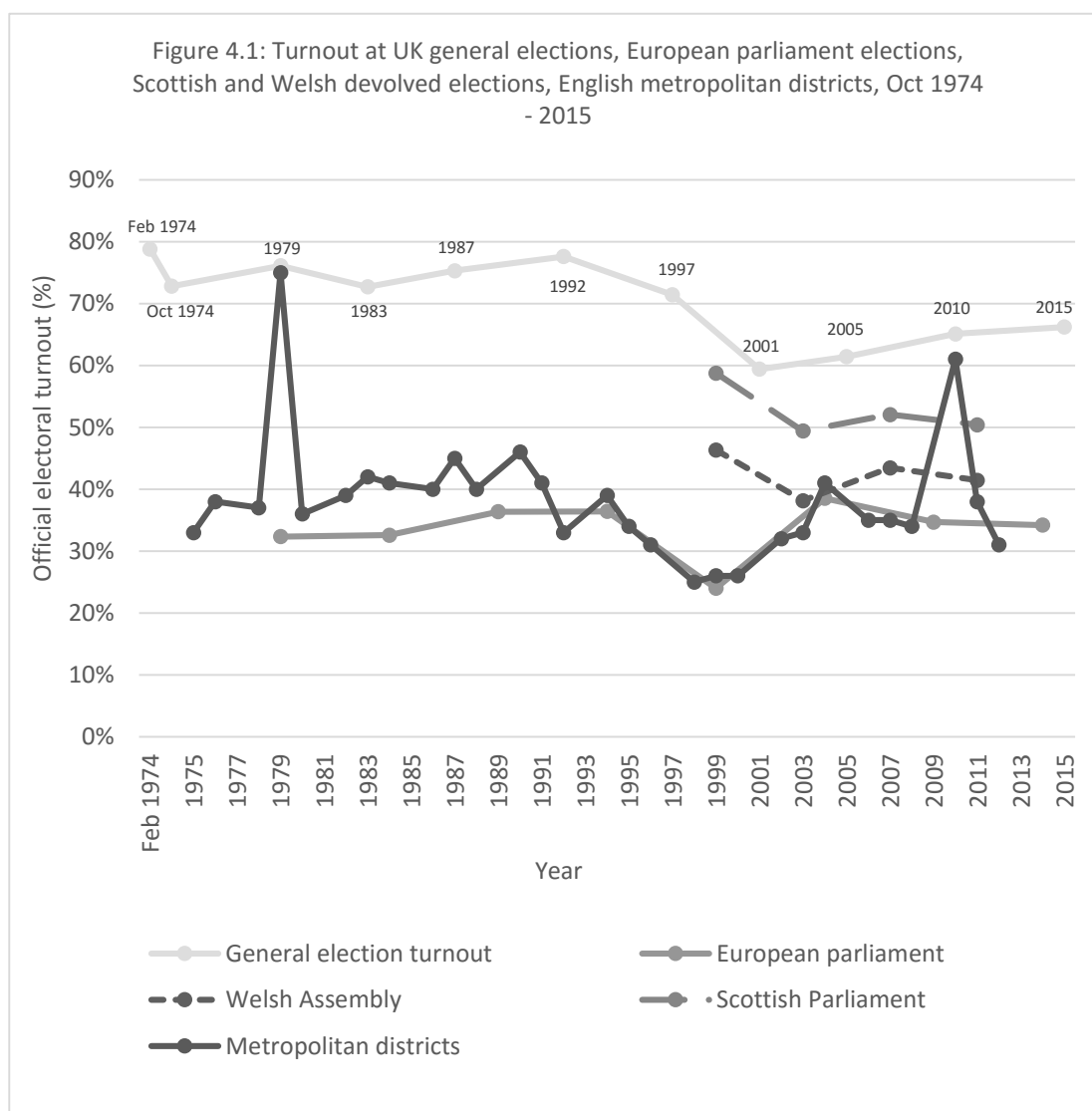
4. The participation puzzle in the British case

Electoral participation in Britain is undeniably falling. Voting, as opposed to abstaining, remains the dominant choice, at least in Westminster general elections, yet even on these first-order occasions approximately a third of eligible electors currently opt for non-participation. In Chapter 3 I introduced the British case by recalling how this statistic of non-participation has been growing against concerted efforts to increase rates of educational attainment. To provide context for the analysis which follows, in this chapter I present trend data which establish the extent of the (youth) participation puzzle in the British electorate, using data from successive cross-sectional British Election Study (BES) surveys since 1974.¹⁹

4.1. Participation in decline?

The stated decline in turnout is demonstrated in Figure 4.1 which tracks aggregate voter turnout since February 1974. Until 2001 official turnout had never fallen below 70 per cent whereas in the four Westminster elections since it has been, on average, just 63 per cent. Given these figures correspond to the number of voters as a proportion of registered electors, the percentage of individuals rejecting electoral participation is likely to be even higher. The Electoral Commission estimates registers in Britain are only 84.7 per cent complete (2014b: 10). This figure has fallen from approximately 96 per cent in the 1950s/60s, 93.5 per cent in 1981, and 91.5 per cent in 2001 (ibid: 54). While there are methodological problems encountered in these estimates, sometimes based on social surveys and other times on national census data, they advise that the decline in voting has been even more extreme than official turnout figures would suggest; the denominator in our calculations is falling as a proportion of the eligible voting age population. These dwindling registration rates even prior to the roll out of individual electoral registration in 2014 – which may itself have an impact – are further evidence of electoral participation losing its appeal.

¹⁹ Alt et al (no date), Clarke et al (2003, 2006), Crewe et al (no date a, no date b), Heath et al (no date, 1993a), Heath et al (1993b), Heath et al (1999), Whiteley and Sanders (2014).

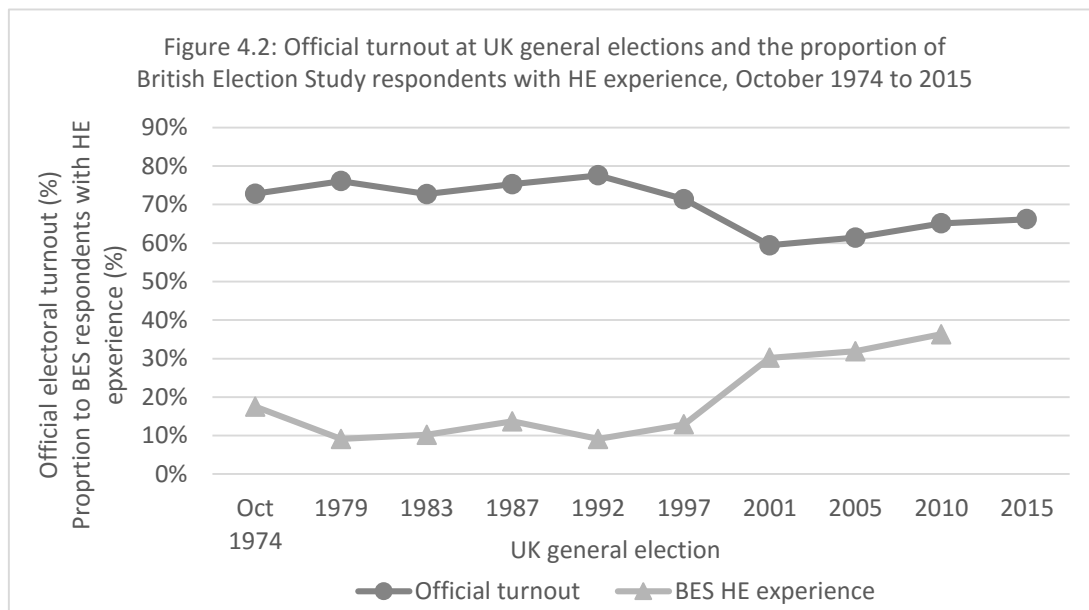


Source: Dar (2013); Hawkins et al (2015); Source: McGuinness et al (2012)

In European Parliament elections a decline has been less notable yet overall turnout here has always been low. Between 1979 and 2009, across seven elections an average of only a third of registered electors (33.6 per cent) were recorded as having voted (Dar 2013: 7). Electoral disengagement is seemingly not unique to Westminster. Trends for local elections are harder to unpick due to variation across councils as to when elections are held and the fraction of councillors to be elected. Issues can also arise though from multi-member wards and non-contestation (ibid: 9). Demonstrated by Figure 4.1, when local elections – in this case metropolitan district elections, as an example – coincide with general elections (1979 and 2010), there is a positive spike. The same has been seen for unitary authorities in England where average turnout in general election years between

1995 and 2012 has been 62.5 per cent compared to 34.6 per cent in the remaining and intervening 14 years (ibid: 10). The varied circumstances surrounding local contests contribute to greater fluctuations over time and make comparisons both across elections and over time more difficult (ibid: 9-13). However, participation rates remain much lower on average than in general elections. Turnout for the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly, indicated by the two dashed lines, is typically higher than in local and European elections yet still lower than in general elections, also falling since their inception in 1999.

There are examples, however, which suggest engagement with politics, even in the formal electoral arena, is not always low. The 2014 referendum on Scottish independence saw turnout surge with 84.6 per cent of registered electors voting alongside record high registration (Electoral Commission 2014a). Evidently referendums – based on a single question, to some extent non-party political, and relatively rare in the UK – are not wholly comparable with regular elections designed to select political representatives. The example nevertheless indicates that electors in Britain, or at least in Scotland, can be willing to participate through formal processes. They are mobilised by political campaigns when issues deemed especially important are at stake, a clear choice is presented, and momentum is built over a longer campaigning period. When speaking of a participation puzzle we must therefore be careful not to generalise or overlook cases refuting the trend. These characteristics of referendums, associated with direct democracy, may even provide valuable lessons in how to reverse the patterns occurring at general elections. However, as a one-off event on an issue with such large potential ramifications, it is unlikely that the turnout rise during the independence referendum was caused by educational expansion and/or social modernisation. We cannot truly contradict the application of Brody's political participation puzzle to the British case on this standalone example. In the 2015 general election turnout in Scotland was notably higher than recorded in the rest of the UK, at 71.1 per cent, suggestive of longer-term impact, and yet still lower than in the referendum (Rallings and Thrasher 2015: 5). Across *comparable* elections, turnout still appears to be largely in decline and lower than would be anticipated with education levels rising.

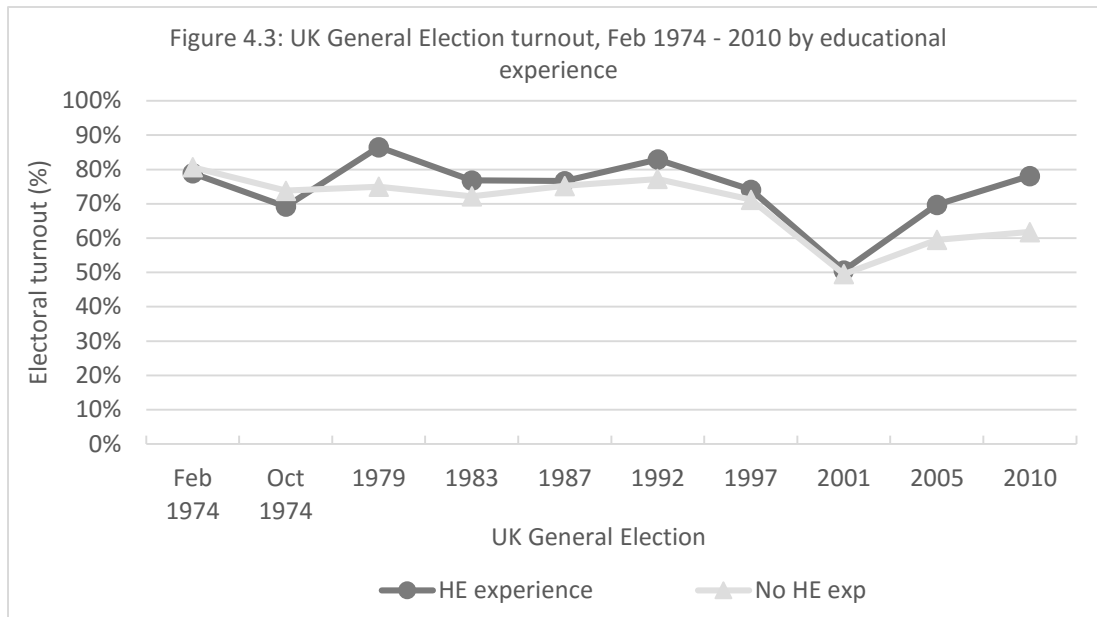


British Election Studies Feb 1974 to 2010; n in parentheses: Oct 1974 (2335), 1979 (1870), 1983 (3937), 1987 (3814), 1992 (3518), 1997 (3588), 2001 (787), 2005 (2888), 2010 (2242), weighted by official turnout at each election; 2015 post-election face-to-face BES data not released at time of writing.

To make this trend puzzling for this research, Figure 4.2 reiterates that this turnout decline has occurred alongside educational expansion.²⁰ The gap between official turnout and the proportion of BES respondents claiming to be in possession of HE experience, either on-course or previous, is narrowing. Moreover, from tracking these trends, it is at particular points in history when HE has expanded that we see the most noticeable changes in voting behaviour. For example, the conversion from polytechnic to university experienced by many institutions in 1992 changed the structure of the HE sector and saw expansion of widening participation (Scott 2012). It is during this period that turnout starts to fall, a drop of 6.2 percentage points between 1992 and 1997. A similar yet more extreme observation is then witnessed again from 2001 occurring at the same time HE was booming with a 44 percent increase in undergraduate students between 1999 and 2009 (UCAS 2010). For much of the period, these are almost perfectly simultaneous trends in their peaks and troughs (yet in opposite directions) for turnout and education. Following 2001 they have both moved with an upward trajectory, although the rates of change have been less rapid. Even if purely observational-level analysis at this stage, there are hints of a generational shift in turnout behaviour which,

²⁰ Starting from October 1974 (as opposed to February 1974) due to large instances of missing educational data skewing HE respondent figures.

when viewed against educational policy, strengthens the rationale for studying an education-turnout participation puzzle in the British case.



Source: British Election Studies Feb 1974 to 2010; n in parentheses: Feb 1974 (816), Oct 1974 (2335), 1979 (1869), 1983 (3937), 1987 (3814), 1992 (3518), 1997 (3587), 2001 (787), 2005 (2889), 2010 (2241), weighted by official turnout at each election.

Interestingly, it is among individuals without HE experience where the fall in turnout has been most pronounced, although as depicted in Figure 4.3, the trends between HE and non-HE individuals have not always been dissimilar. Since 1979, individuals without HE experience have been less likely to vote than their HE counterparts. Chi-square tests for each election suggest the difference is significant ($p < .05$) as early as 1979 and also in 1992, becoming more consistent in recent years with both 2005 and 2010 recording significant results. Crucially, the gap is growing. Notwithstanding fluctuations, between the two end points the turnout of individuals with HE experience has fallen less than 1 percentage point. A binominal test of deviance suggests no notable change ($p = .087$). Turnout in 2010 was even greater than in the 1980s. In contrast, non-HE individuals have gone from being marginally more participative at the start of the period, to a figure 16.3 per cent lower, a fall of 18.9 percentage points over the ten elections ($p < .001$). The ratio of HE to non-HE turnout rises from 1.0 in February 1974 to 1.3 in 2010. This points towards sorting model and relative education effect explanations, the non-HE electorate dropping out of elections at a more extreme rate while the HE electorate remain relatively constant. However, why is turnout falling so much here when despite their not attending university these individuals are more educated than similar individuals in

previous generations? Questions also still remain as to why the impact of HE tends to plateau. In Helliwell and Putnam's opinion (2007) there could be a summative effect whereby support for democracy rises among all groups as society becomes more educated. Certainly, there has been a rise in the two most recent elections but why have there been falls previously and why has turnout not risen more?

The final element to the puzzle for this thesis relates to age and the degree to which the puzzle is more evident among young people. It has already been discussed how it is among young people where the positive impact of educational expansion is thought to be experienced most. They are the group to which education policy is typically targeted and implemented. If the school leaving age or school curriculum changes, they are directly affected, while university admissions are dominated by young people. Only 17.4 per cent of first year UK domiciled first degree students in 2013/2014 were aged 25 years or more (HESA 2015). They are also where turnout is lowest. In Britain, for the general elections between February 1974 and 2010, 18-24 year olds were the least likely to vote, recording an average of just 51.2 per cent (based on the BES data).²¹ This compares with the 71.1 per cent average and a high of 79.8 per cent among 65-74 year olds. Young people are under-participative and resultantly under-represented.

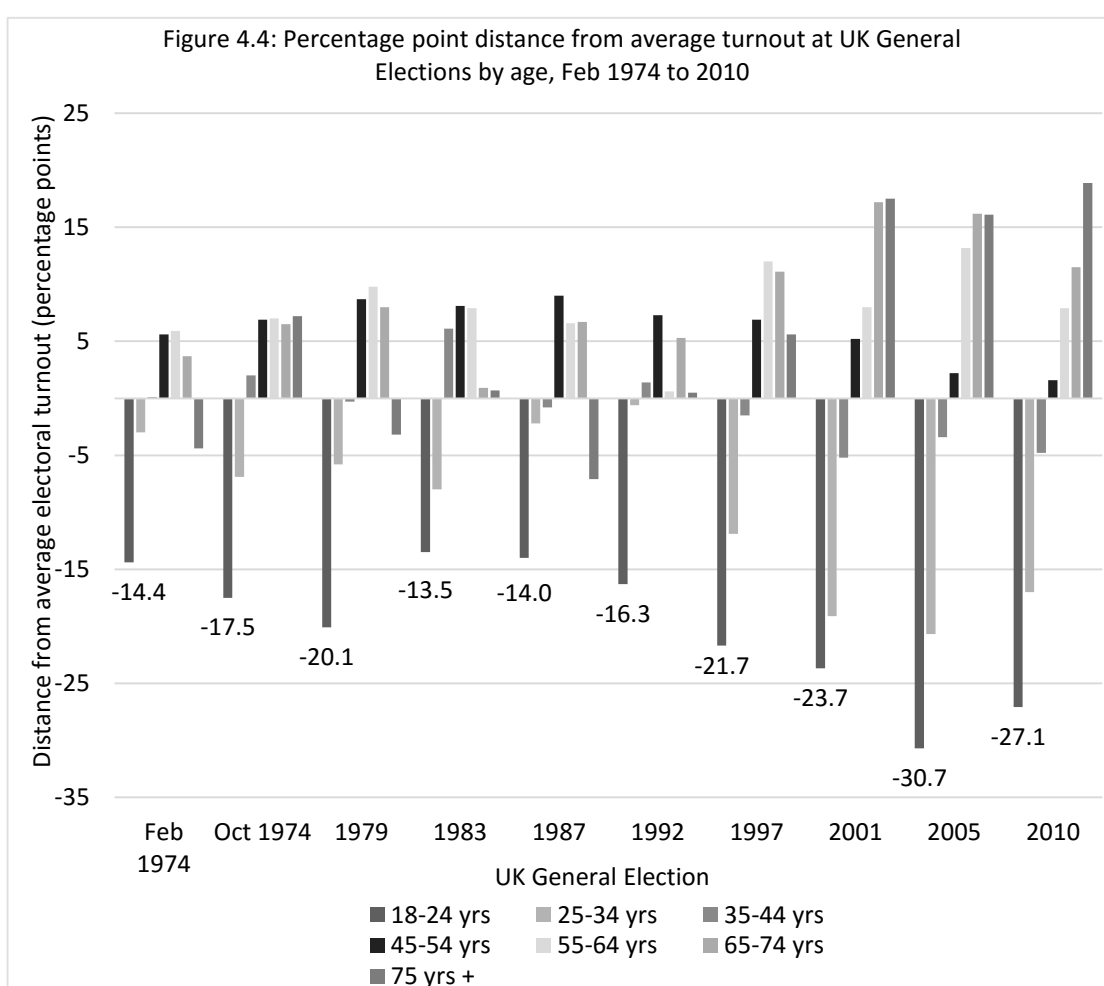
Further analysis reveals this is a worsening phenomenon. Turnout for all groups has clearly been falling – they are all significantly less likely to have voted in 2010 than in February 1974,²² bar the 75+ years constituency where turnout has risen, likely linked to health improvements in older age. However, Figure 4.4 presents how far young people diverge from other electoral groups over the period. The percentage point distance from average (official) turnout is presented for every age group at each successive general election with the corresponding statistic for young people being highlighted. This approach permits a level of standardisation controlling for differences in absolute turnout – both for age groups and at each election – to make comparisons of young and old over time more easily observable (see Nie et al 1974: 323-6).

Older age groups, from the age of 35 years upwards and more recently 45 years, are found to be consistently over-participative. Contrastingly, young people are always

²¹ N ranges from 1,874 to 3,955, weighted by official turnout at each election.

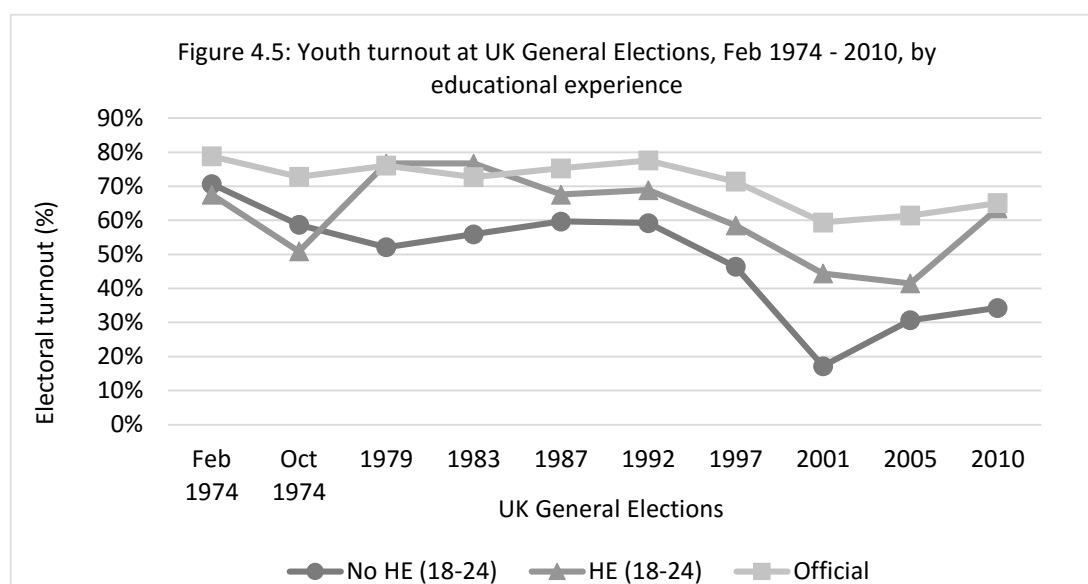
²² Binomial tests of difference conducted for each age group comparing 2010 to February 1974.

below average and, importantly, increasingly so. Whereas during the period 1974 to 1992 the likelihood of a young person voting ranged between being 13.5 and 20.1 percentage points lower than average (a mean distance of 16.0 percentage points), across the four most recent BES samples the figure has increased to an average distance of 25.8 percentage points, experiencing a maximum of 30.7 in 2005. The rate of change has subsequently most marked for young people. The relative change for 18-24 year olds between February 1974 and 2010 is a fall of 41.0 per cent. For those aged 65 to 74 years, the change is only a 7.2 per cent decrease (see Sincott and Achen method in Persson et al 2013: 174). The neighbouring age group (25-34 years) similarly participate less than the norm and at an increasing rate but it is only more recently that this has appeared especially notable.



Source: British Election Studies Feb 1974 to 2010, n ranging from 1,874 to 3,955 (weighted by official turnout at each election), youth turnout distance from average turnout in percentage points for 18-24 year olds highlighted in data labels.

The chart shows that if young people are mirroring general trends between each election – the same peaks and troughs – their decline has still been much more drastic. They are demonstrating behaviours which are not evidenced elsewhere to anywhere near the same extent, the data not only alluding to potential life-cycle or ‘youth disadvantage’ effects but also generational shifts. Young people in the twenty first century are a more unlikely group of voters than the same age group were historically (see Phelps 2012). In turn, I would argue there are likely factors unique to today’s young people and changes occurring which are encouraging abstention in ways not previously experienced, or not the same degree, by older age groups and former generations. This supports the youth focus of my study. Additionally, within these longitudinal trends the gap between young and older voters clearly extends most rapidly from the 1990s onwards coinciding again with a period of HE expansion (Martin 2012b). Such observations provide further justification for exploring the relationship between education and turnout in more detail within the young constituency.



Source: British Election Studies Feb 1974 to 2010, youth n = Feb 1974 (143), Oct 1974 (172), 1979 (193), 1983 (603), 1987 (532), 1992 (411), 1997 (318), 2001 (101), 2005 (261), 2010 (189) (weighted by official turnout at each election).

Among young people, the HE divide is again apparent (Figure 4.5) with significant differences in 1979, 1983, 1997, and 2010.²³ This alludes to the divide having a long history. As in the wider electorate, albeit to a lesser extent given an overall lower turnout rate, we find a positive association between education and voting. More conventionally

²³ Chi-square, $p < .05$.

reasoned education effects could appear to be operating still. However, the differences are not always significant, suggesting similarity between the two groups at certain points, for instance in 2001 and 2005. In these fairly recent elections, both have been equally deterred from turning out and abstention is not the preserve of the non-HE group. For the most part young people with HE have also been less likely to vote than official turnout figures. This could in part result from a youth disadvantage but also calls into question the turnout raising potential of education. HE experience does not appear to be enough, even as this group expands, to overcome other obstacles discouraging them from turning out.

Moreover, with citizenship education introduced in 2001, all young people in England entering the electorate today should possess at least some understanding of politics, and more so than assumed for previous generations (see Keating et al 2010; Whiteley 2014). The impact of this on voting is still being assessed since those young people experiencing the 'full quota' of the citizenship curriculum have only just entered the electorate but research does suggest it can support participation at the individual level (Whiteley 2014).²⁴ They are also more educated in absolute terms where the school leaving age and GCSE pass rates have been rising (Adams 2015). The persistently low turnout of the non-HE group is thus even more startling.

Combined, these investigations highlight further the incidence of a participation puzzle among British electors. It is also one which is more extreme among young people and particularly those who are not entering universities. This evidently hints more strongly at the influence of sorting model logic, young people experiencing status decline (perceived and real) in response to educational inflation dropping out of formal politics to an ever increasing extent. However, the electoral participation rates of young people with HE experience are, relative to wider electorate turnout, still lower than might be expected within conventional civic education theories. In the chapters which now follow, it is my intention to examine these issues in more detail and develop a theoretical framework which can be used to explain how and why both these groups are contributing to low and falling youth turnout.

²⁴ Across the devolved administrations provision nevertheless varies, being non-statutory in Scotland and Wales, for example, where in the former it is estimated less than a third (30 per cent) of school pupils receive any formal citizenship teaching (Andrews and Mycock 2007 in Kisby and Sloam 2012: 76).

5. Education, disaffection, and turnout

The disaffected citizenry framework I propose is predicated on the view that young people today have greater potential for being dissatisfied with and alienated from politics than any other electoral age group. In Britain, there has been rapid and unprecedented expansion of higher education (HE) (UCAS 2010; Furlong and Cartmel 2007; Schofer and Meyer 2005). There have also been moves which have seen learning and teaching across educational settings place greater emphasis on self-expression and self-actualisation, following a critical and emancipatory pedagogical shift (Maslow 1943; Inglehart and Welzel 2005; McKenzie 2001; Shor 1992). Combined, these are expected to increase the likelihood of assuming critical citizenship (Norris 1999, 2011); individuals are more capable and willing to challenge established political norms and formal conventions. Among young people, a growing proportion of individuals with HE experience is thought to be especially questioning of duty-based conceptions of voting. Instead they will demonstrate a heightened demand for direct participation and resent the (perceived) absence of a more representative and responsive parliamentary class able to supply their interests (dissatisfied-disaffection). Meanwhile, non-HE young people – albeit a group diminishing in size – are finding their potential for critical views becoming more extreme in response to declining status and exclusion from politically mobilising and influential networks (alienated-disaffection). Thus, on two levels, young people today are anticipated to be the most disaffected citizens. Allied to this I extend the argument to suggest disaffection's impact on electoral participation is more pronounced among young people.

Older generations might still, on occasion, report negative perceptions of politics and possess particular standards – demanding or ambivalent – against which politics is judged. They can also therefore present as dissatisfied or alienated. Yet, it is my contention that where such views exist, the influence is stronger on young people's participation approaches than on those of other, older electors. In part, this relates to factors associated with life-cycle position. With a lack of electoral habits and/or the additional life-stage incentives to vote, young people can encounter fewer pro-voting influences. For instance, a history of voting and party loyalty might otherwise mitigate the negative impact of any political criticism. However, tied more closely to education-based mechanisms, educational expansion and changes within the curriculum and dominant pedagogy are also expected to have an effect. As a more educated generation

– and one increasingly subject to targeted citizenship teaching (Whiteley 2014; Kisby and Sloam 2012) and emancipatory approaches (McKenzie 2001; Shor 1992; Carr 1995)
– ideas associated with disaffection would be thought to have more resonance among today’s young people. Even if disaffection exists for other groups, research has us believe it faces greater competition in their decision-making processes from civic duty and commitments to traditional, hierarchical practices (see Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Inglehart 1977, 1990; Blais and Rubenson 2013; Dalton 2006, 2008a, 2008b). Its overall influence is weaker. For younger generations, in contrast, ‘the politics of choice appears to be replacing the politics of loyalties’ (Norris 2002: 4), so affording disaffection attitudes a potentially greater role.

The framework I have developed subsequently relates not only to levels and incidence of disaffection. It also considers the extent of disaffection’s dominance in an individual’s approach to politics and through this, its role in determining their political behaviour – of which turnout is a key component. Issues here form the cornerstone of the thesis and in the sections which now follow, I examine in detail claims that young people’s participation puzzle can be best understood as their being a non-voting disaffected citizenry. The chapter, the crux of my framework, builds to testing my first central hypothesis:

H1: The negative impact of political disaffection on individual voter turnout at general elections is greater for young people than for other, older electors.

The prioritisation of disaffection within explanations of low and falling turnout reflects two initial, additional assumptions: a) disaffection is increasing over time, alongside educational expansion and turnout decline, and b) disaffection is highest at any election among young electors who, in response to educational changes and their youth condition, are most likely to express critical attitudes. These expectations provide a backdrop against which contemporary explanations, linking education and attitudes to turnout behaviours, can be framed and applied. Continuing directly from the preceding chapter, I first use data from the British Election Study (BES) to trace over-time trends across several attitudinal variables, assessing electorates’ changing perceptions of formal politics. I then examine the nature of disaffection among Britain’s current electorate – focused on attitudes in and around the 2010 UK general election. Here I demonstrate a new way of conceptualising and operationalising political criticism which

can be used to compare types of disaffection and variation on these across electorate groups. This marks one of my major contributions, the creation of absolute and relative scale indicators – using a disaffection deficit approach – to assess attitudes on both my proposed dimensions; the dissatisfied and alienated forms of disaffection. This is important not only to create the independent variables for use in modelling turnout behaviour. It also begins the process of thinking about different ways in which education and age affect individuals' attitudes towards and engagement with politics, and in different ways. With these indicators and demographic control variables I develop the observational over-time tracing to test assumptions regarding disaffection prevalence. I use data from the 2011 British Participation Study (BPS) (Webb 2012) for across-electorate comparisons and the 2011 Citizens in Transition Survey (CITS) for within-youth-electorate analysis (Whiteley et al 2013).

Finally, for this chapter, I employ the new attitudinal indicators to examine relationships between disaffection and individual voter turnout in a direct test of *H1*. This involves assessing the extent to which different forms and components of disaffection moderate the roles of education and age to determine electoral participation and how groups are affected in different ways. Focusing first on across-electorate patterns, I conduct these tests using the BPS and the newly-devised disaffection variables before exploring variation within the youth sample of the CITS to assess the extent to which disaffection is a feature of all young people's turnout decisions.

5.1. Tracing disaffection

The application of the disaffected citizenry framework remains shaped by a belief that disaffection is becoming a more prevalent condition of British electors, an inevitable consequence of rising educational levels. A significant problem encountered, however, when historically tracking rates of disaffection is the relatively limited data available in Britain on the subject, posing issues for measurement consistency. This is evidenced in surveys' coverage of relevant attitude variables and the time points at which data have been collected. For example, despite several repeated measures across BES surveys (Scarborough 2000), this is not always true of attitudinal indicators which reflect more subjective and researcher-led interests. Standardisation in questions has typically been reserved for voting behaviour variables, such as turnout and party choice. Attitudinal explorations are instead influenced by research teams' own objectives as well as

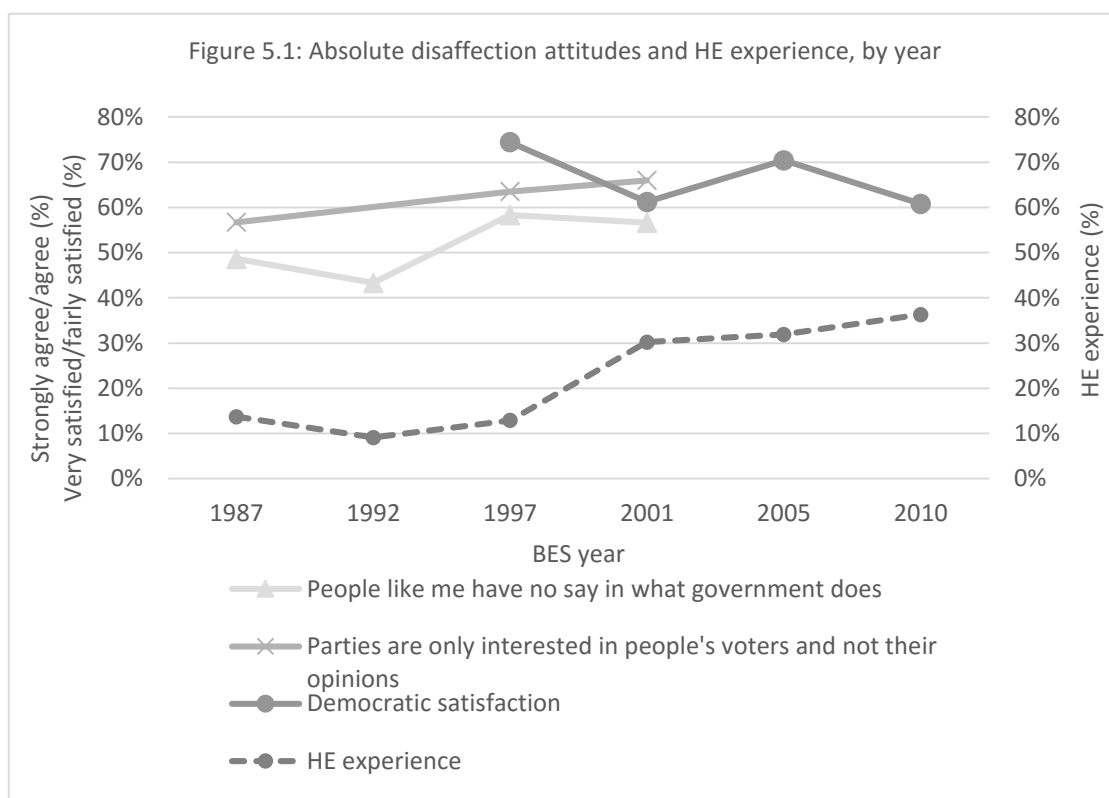
contemporary issues at the time of fieldwork. For instance, in the 2010 BES, several questions which could link to disaffection were specific to the political context. Respondents were asked about politicians' trustworthiness in regards to MPs' expenses and also satisfaction with current democratic processes in light of the (then upcoming) referendum on changing to an Alternative Vote system (Howat et al 2011: 6-8).

There are consequently obstacles to more sophisticated longitudinal analysis. Instead, I focus here on a general picture of how some attitudes have changed using predominantly observational techniques. Due to the data limitations this also involves tracing only perceptions of politics as opposed to preferences – an absolute form of disaffection only. Furthermore, as determined by data availability there are restricted time periods. The BES dates back to 1963 and yet the earliest survey where a suitable relevant and repeated disaffection variable for my purposes can be found is in 1987. Nonetheless, the periods studied tend to cover dates over which British education has arguably expanded most (see McKenzie 2001; UCAS 2010) and thus will still contribute to wider understanding of the participation puzzle. During more recent years there has also been numerous high profile scandals and controversial events in British politics which could have particular bearing on electors' assessments, such as the Iraq War (2003), cash for honours (2006), financial crisis (2007/8) and parliamentary expenses (2009) (see Fox 2015: 2). Evidently these are not new to British politics, for example the 1963 Profumo Affair. However, with increased media scrutiny and the cumulative impact of successive scandals, we might expect them to have greater impact on disaffection today, especially given weakening of party loyalty and civic duty. The proportion of British electors being fairly or very strong party supporters, for example, has fallen from 37 per cent to 30 per cent even just between 2007 and 2014 (Hansard Society 2014: 45) while over the same period, agreement on voting being a civic duty fell from 78 to 67 per cent (ibid: 25).

I choose four variables to trace as an indication of general trends. These include agreement on whether individuals believe 'people like them' *do not* have a say in government activity (1987, 1992, 1997, and 2001), levels of political influence (2001, 2005, and 2010), perceptions of political parties and their priorities (1987, 1997, 2001), and satisfaction with democracy (1997, 2001, 2005, and 2010).²⁵ The first two largely reflect issues of external efficacy. Assumptions are that rates will have gone down as

²⁵ Question and variable wording can be found in Appendix A.

educated individuals become increasingly aware of and frustrated by seemingly closed opportunities encountered when seeking effective involvement in politics. However, any decline here, especially on political influence, might not be anticipated to be as severe as for other indicators. For some individuals their perceived influence may increase or remain steady where they possess faith in alternative participation opportunities, for example. This corresponds with repertoire replacement logic. The third, concerned with political parties, relates more closely to political responsiveness, thinking about electors' opinions of whether political are actors acting appropriately. Finally, democratic satisfaction is an overall assessment of how well the political system, its institutions and actors, are performing. Trends for all but influence (incomparable response scale) are presented in Figure 5.1.²⁶



Source: British Election Studies 1987-2001, weighted by official general election turnout at each election; 'People like me have no say in what government does', n = 3388 (1987), 2200 (1992), 3019 (1997), and 2987 (2001); 'Parties are only interested in people's votes and not their opinions', n = 3354 (1987), 3025 (1992), 2978 (1997); Democratic satisfaction, n = 3031 (1997), 3026 (2001), 3535 (2005), and 3070 (2010); HE experience, n = 3814 (1987), 3518 (1992), 3588 (1997), 787 (2001), 2888 (2005), and 2242 (2010)

²⁶ All BES conducted with election-specific official turnout weighting applied.

There has been an increase in the proportion of electors believing they have no say in government activity, between 1987 and 2001.²⁷ A binomial test of deviance suggests significant change, $p < .001$ (1-sided). It can be inferred that individuals over the period have become more sceptical about their ability to impact on government, be listened to, and be sufficiently consulted in decision-making. Pessimism has risen. While data are unavailable post-2001, the period nonetheless ends with the UK general election in which turnout hit a record low – 59.4 per cent – and so would fit with assumptions surrounding an association between growing disaffection and declining turnout. Equally, the inclusion of HE experience figures on the graph reveal the trend has occurred alongside the proportion of the sample reporting having past or on-course HE experience increasing. Interestingly, age-based differences are insignificant except in 1987 (Chi-square, $p < .05$) which implies change has been occurring across electorates as a whole rather than being primarily the result of new incoming electors pulling aggregate opinion down. A possible proposition is that the speed of attitudes shifting is perhaps slower than that of turnout decline which, as seen previously, is falling both between electorates *and* between age groups (i.e. within electorates). In turn, it also suggests that if disaffection trends are tied to educational expansion, the environmental effect might operate principally at a population rather than cohort level; as the electorate *as a whole* becomes more educated, these views become more prevalent. They are not more frequently reported among the most educated, that is to say among young people.

It is telling that on this first statement, in 1987 individuals without HE experience were significantly more likely to agree or strongly agree. More than half (52.7) per cent did so compared to 28.9 per cent of individuals who reported being either graduates or on-course university students at the time of fieldwork. These patterns might be expected. Non-HE individuals are thought to meet the characteristics associated with the negative effects of educational inflation (sorting model) and so could feel excluded from key socio-political networks and institutions due to lower status and position. They would have reason to feel more lacking in political voice. However, by 1992 the relationship is reversed, HE individuals demonstrating significantly greater criticism at 56.2 per cent compared with just 42.0 per cent of non-HE individuals. Conversely, this supports claims of there being a growing number of highly educated individuals who are critical of

²⁷ All British Election Study analysis weighted by official general turnout for each corresponding election.

opportunities for influence in existing political channels. Interestingly, in 1997 and in 2001, neither group is noticeably different from the other implying growing disaffection might be associated with both HE and non-HE groups. The increased levels of agreement on the statement cannot be uniquely attributed to either constituency.²⁸

Since 2001, BES respondents have been asked to rate the level of influence they feel able to exert in politics, on a scale from zero (no influence at all) to ten (great deal of influence). This captures a similar concept as above, related to external efficacy, and allows us to trace whether there has been a further decline in this area. In 2001, when 56.6 per cent of respondents believed they had no say in government activity, the average score for political influence was 1.65 (n=3017). This increased in 2005 to 2.48 (n=4138), implying the previous trend did not continue, yet fell to 1.62 in 2010 (n=3057). From these three summary statistics it is difficult to draw substantive conclusions about a rise or fall in perceived influence. What is clear, however, is that in these recent general elections where we know turnout has been at its lowest, individuals have possessed low confidence in the openness of the political world to their influence. In no year does it score highly. Further disaggregation reveals no consistent patterns across age groups of either a positive or negative nature. However, in each of the three surveys, individuals with HE experience rate their level of influence higher.²⁹ Again, this is not necessarily unanticipated. With a more general question of political influence, as opposed to the earlier question explicitly recording electors' influence *on government*, HE levels would be thought to make some individuals feel externally efficacious. It might relate to alternative participation opportunities and personal access to political and media elites who shape policy even when government itself appears inaccessible.

On the percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that parties are only interested in people's votes and not their opinions, suggestive of negative views on political responsiveness, there is further evidence of increasing criticism. Between 1987 and 2001 rates grew from 56.7 per cent to 66.0 per cent within a linear, upward trend towards negativity. This change was again significant on a binomial test, $p < .001$ (1-tailed). In the two most recent years there is no clear difference between age groups, the decline being once more a phenomenon evident for whole electorates rather than across

²⁸ 1987: χ^2 (4, n=3337) = 129.051, $p < .001$; 1992: χ^2 (4, n=2213) = 18.464, $p = .001$; 1997: χ^2 (4, n=2998) = 3.532, $p = .473$; 2001: χ^2 (4, n=771) = 1.336, $p = .855$.

²⁹ Mann Whitney U tests significant in each survey, $p < .001$.

the more narrowly-defined cohorts. Differences between educational groups have also moved from a position of clear difference – non-HE respondents were more critical at the start of the period – to one in which responses are similar. HE respondents actually report marginally higher levels of agreement, indicative of greater disaffection.³⁰ Both educational groups can therefore be presented as contributing to falling levels of confidence in the behaviour of political parties and politicians. It is again not possible to apply these thoughts to more recent elections given the absence of comparable variables in 2005 and 2010.

Finally, there have been moves towards electors expressing greater dissatisfaction with democracy in the UK since 1997, although fluctuations are evident. Satisfaction rose in 2005, for example, before falling again in 2010 to its lowest ever level.³¹ In the space of just over a decade there has been a considerable fall in satisfaction. With the rise in 2005, however, there are also suggestions that context might matter. Without earlier data it is difficult to see whether this is truly a downward trend in which 2005 is simply an anomaly or whether fluctuations in this score are common, being more heavily impacted on by particular events or government policies, for example. People might be swayed by partisan loyalties and whether their preferred party is in government, or by the dominant issues in party campaigns, or even the marginality within their own local constituency. Given democracy is a fairly broad term and potentially liable to conceptual stretching in survey respondents' own interpretations of the question, issues of validity could also explain variation across surveys. Some individuals might assess institutional structures in their answer while others will relate their responses to current government performance. This can vary between electorates yet also, depending on the issues of the day, within electorates – it may on occasion reflect external efficacy while on another, more responsiveness considerations.

Of note is that in every election young people report the lowest levels of satisfaction (Chi-square, $p < .05$ in 2001 and 2010), and in both 2001 and 2010 only just over half of 18-24 year olds felt satisfied. Thus when satisfaction falls across the electorate, young people seem especially susceptible to responding negatively to the general mood and when it rises, be less willing to recognise or reward improvements in performance. This supports

³⁰ 1987: χ^2 (4, $n=3348$) = 70.668, $p < .001$; 1997: χ^2 (4, $n=3004$) = 7.554, $p = .109$; 2001: χ^2 (4, $n=767$) = 4.315, $p = .365$.

³¹ Overall, a binomial test between 1997 and 2010 indicates significant results, $p < .001$ (1-sided test).

a view that young people, always the most educated, are some of the most disaffected. Given democratic satisfaction also implies a relative judgment – ‘satisfaction’ almost always implicitly influenced by individuals’ expectations – it might suggest young people are more demanding or at least place different demands on representative democracy. Variation between educational groups is not as consistent, individuals with HE recording higher rates of satisfaction in 2010 but less in 1997, and in 2001 and 2005 both groups responding similarly.³²

From these four variables, some suggestions can be made regarding my hypotheses and disaffected citizenry framework. While obvious issues with the data exist to prevent extended longitudinal analysis we can first see that where disaffection has been high, turnout has often been low, coinciding further with educational expansion (see also Figure 4.2). This is most notable in 2001 where turnout has been at its lowest, education has expanded, and disaffection typically high. Interestingly, however, where data are available, disaffection appears highest in 2010, a year in which official turnout in fact rose. This does not necessarily undermine claims of disaffection increasing over time. It simply suggests that at the aggregate level the relationship between the three variables of disaffection, educational experience, and turnout, is not necessarily linear and that a rise in disaffection (and education) will not always be associated with a concurrent fall in turnout. Turnout in 2010 was nevertheless still low and failed to return to pre-2001 levels where previously it had always been above 70 per cent. Equally, the change of administration in 2010 and closer election could have minimised the impact of disaffection, the electoral context potentially contributing to this slight increase in turnout while overall attitudes remained critical (Heath 2011).

Crucially, changing attitude patterns are also not unique to a single educational group. As such, theories explaining the participation puzzle with ideas relating to non-HE individuals (e.g. the sorting model) and those which emphasise HE individuals (e.g. repertoire replacement and critical citizens) could both still be relevant. This supports my proposition of the need to develop a model which appreciates and incorporates explanations relating to each of these groups. Any theory using disaffection in this moderating role would appear to be lacking if it seeks to focus only on one. At the same

³² 1997: χ^2 (3, n=3010) = 9.040, p = .029; 2001: χ^2 (3, n=744) = 2.856, p = .414; 2005: χ^2 (3, n=2465) = 1.800, p = .615; 2010: χ^2 (3, n=2144) = 11.142, p = .011.

time, however, few clear and consistent age differences are recorded. The implication is that these views are not always more prevalent in the youngest age group. Instead, changes in attitudes seem to be more gradual and occurring at the national population level; the electorate as a whole is moving in this direction as society becomes more educated but the change is not so rapid as to be occurring within electorates. However, with only four variables explored it is not possible yet to draw strong conclusions. Alternative indicators, such as those relating to falling party membership – Conservatives falling from 2.9 million to 250,000 between 1951 and 2008, and Labour 876,000 to 166, 000 (Heath 2011: 123) – and turnout itself (ibid: 121) continue to suggest a fall in support over time for traditional and formal political institutions. This remains suggestive of rising disaffection.

5.2. Perceptions of politics: a more disaffected youth?

In the over-time analysis, differences between age groups have appeared less pronounced than anticipated, and frequently insignificant. The impact of ‘more education’ in encouraging disaffection is not necessarily stronger among the most educated. My attention now turns, however, to assessing this statement in more detail using cross-sectional analysis surrounding the 2010 general election. To do so, I present a new development of methods designed to measure disaffection – combining a number of relevant variables – and use this to test further the prevalence and determinants of critical views across age and education groups. To what extent, if at all, are young people more disaffected when the research adopts this more complete and sophisticated approach to capturing attitudes towards politics?

An initial test of democratic satisfaction in the British Participation Survey (BPS), ‘On the whole, how satisfied, if at all, are you with the way that democracy works in this country?’, with responses recorded on a four-point scale from ‘Not at all satisfied’ to ‘Very satisfied’ finds no significant differences between age groups,³³ $\chi^2 (18, n=1234) = 25.064$, $p = .123$.³⁴ The same cannot be said for the BES sample above where on the almost identical question, 18-24 year olds were least satisfied, 15.5 per cent ‘Very dissatisfied’ compared to a 10.4 per cent average, $\chi^2 (18, n=2883) = 67.085$, $p < .001$. Importantly,

³³ 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75+ years.

³⁴ Unless otherwise specified, all BPS analysis conducted with sample weighted by official turnout for 2010 general election.

however, there is no single understanding of political disaffection. Rather, as Norris argues in her presentation of critical citizens, concepts associated with this are often more helpfully viewed as comprising numerous interrelated components (1999, 2011). Since democracy can be variously interpreted and defined, over-reliance on responses to a single question, based on an overall judgement, is unlikely to capture nuances in how and where any criticism of politics materialises. It will very much depend on respondent interpretation. As stated, for some, the question relates to systems and institutional processes while for others their responses might be formed with reference to current government performance or a specific electoral outcome. Therefore, even where we see an age divide in the BES it is unclear as to the attitudes which are truly being captured. It may even be that concepts of democracy vary across age groups and generations and so contribute to this significant result emerging.

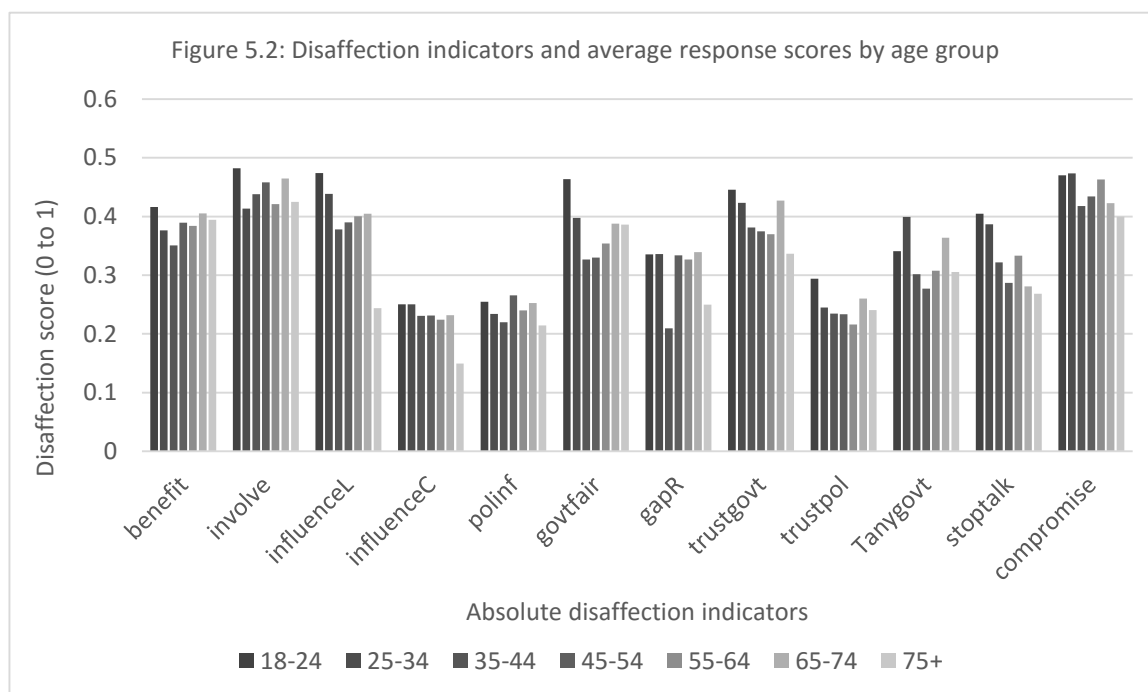
The disaffected citizenry framework I present in Chapter 2 is designed to encompass external efficacy, responsiveness perceptions (in part linked to trust), democratic ideals, and internal efficacy. Disaffection is applied as a multifaceted concept. Within this it argues the nature of individuals' participatory preferences and ideals, influenced by their varying educational experiences, impact significantly on how their criticism is internally judged, shaping both the character of their disaffection and subsequent behavioural choices. Crucially, what is thought to be consistent across all types of disaffected citizen, however, is their negative views of politics based on an absolute disaffection concept, one which is concerned only with perceptions and experiences. This contrasts with a more relative measure in which individuals make assessments informed by their expectations and demands. While the latter elements are important – having the potential to amplify or minimise how critical an individual truly feels – and will be examined below, it is first necessary to ask the question: to what extent, if at all, are young people today consistently more negative than other, older individuals when reflecting on the political world they encounter? With both education as an encourager of a more critical citizen and education as a social sorting mechanism, young people should record lower scores in external efficacy and perceived political responsiveness. This will be indicative of low levels of approval, their age in part a proxy indicator for higher generational aggregate education. Educational differences, while still expected in overall turnout should be less evident in this area of absolute disaffection. While different mechanisms can be at work, the attitudinal outcomes should be similar across educational groups within each cohort.

The BPS includes various measures for testing these propositions. There is a greater number of relevant variables here than is available in the BES, hence my decision to make this my primary data source despite its sampling limitations of which we must remain aware. The chosen variables are presented in Table C1 (Appendix C) where they are grouped within two overarching categories: external efficacy, concerned with the structures and systems within which politics takes place, and political responsiveness, concerned with the actors and networks which inhabit these political structures, make decisions and set agendas. Trust and responsiveness appear closely linked, theoretically – research suggests trust improves where political actors are seen to be responsive (‘external output efficacy’) (Craig 1979) – *and* statistically (supported by strong reliability alpha scores, Table C1). Additionally, while three component indicators for responsiveness relate specifically to trust, they are applied here within the wider notion of how much faith individuals have in the ability and willingness of political actors to be responsive to their interests and act appropriately. Therefore, for the purposes of the remaining analysis I incorporate trust within responsiveness. For standardisation and improved comparability, all the variables are recoded between zero and one with reverse coding applied to any negative statements. Thus, a score closer to one indicates a more positive view of politics and a score closer to zero a negative view.

Figure 5.2 demonstrates variation across the sample on these chosen indicators.³⁵ Quite strikingly, it is noticeable that disaffection in this absolute sense appears high for all groups. Remembering that a score closer to one indicates a positive perception, on no indicator does any age group score higher than .5 implying the population is more dissatisfied than satisfied with political institutions, the actors which inhabit them, and their output performances. With these negative views being dominant, it is not entirely surprising turnout in the corresponding 2010 general election was just 65.1 per cent if the hypothesised negative association between turnout and disaffection exists. Heath, for example, claims this turnout figure must be studied with an appreciation of ‘a backdrop of widespread dissatisfaction with politics’ (2011: 120). However, more significantly for my framework, young people are still not more critical than anyone else. Indeed, on four of five external efficacy indicators, 18-24 year olds demonstrated the

³⁵ Full variable names detailed in Table C1 (Appendix C), with further description of original data provided in Appendix A.

most positive responses, suggesting they are some of the most likely individuals to believe the political system is open to their influence. Thus if they are deterred from participating at elections it is not necessarily a response to their being more likely to believe there can be no benefit from them doing so or that they are powerless in their political activity.



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; n ranges from 1183 to 1326

Arguably, however, without explicitly referencing elections in the questions, these higher rates of external efficacy may not relate solely to assessments of electoral influence. It could reflect optimistic assessments on the potential of more informal political activities. Students, for example, while not necessarily supporting electoral participation to the same extent as many older electors can demonstrate ‘youthful dynamism, naïve utopianism, disrespect for authority, [and] buoyant optimism’ in their approach to politics (DeGroot 1998: 4). Under certain conditions they could still have faith in social movements and campaigns as means of exerting influence, so feel in possession of external efficacy. Given their age, young people have often not experienced or witnessed failures from alternative forms of participation to the same extent as older groups, and therefore cynicism surrounding the effectiveness of political action, more broadly defined, could be lower (see Topf 1995: 58).

For example, Hooghe and Marien (2014: 546-7), studying the Belgian electorate, have found young people and highly educated individuals rate non-institutionalised forms of participation as highly effective. As such, young people perceiving themselves as being able to affect politics is not unquestionably an admission of *electoral* efficacy. As alluded to previously, a relevant line of argument in repertoire replacement theory would be represented by those individuals who, even if thought to comprise only a small group, are assumed to possess generalised external efficacy but low levels specifically for elections (see Levine and Cureton 1998: 149). It should also be noted that differences between age groups are only significant on individuals believing they can influence local decision-making (Kruskal-Wallis H test at $p < .05$),³⁶ implying young people are not notably more efficacious than older groups. Nevertheless, they clearly do not stand out as more critical of these democratic structures than anyone else either, which weakens this component of the framework's underlying assumptions.

Furthermore, on the seven political responsiveness variables – potentially more strongly associated with formal electoral politics in their relating to the actions of elected representatives – young people record the highest scores on four of the indicators. This includes two trust variables, assessments of fairness within the political system, and criticism of politicians in needing to 'stop talking' and take action. These cover a range of responsiveness concerns. On each, the differences are also significant (Kruskal-Wallis H tests at $p < .05$). Young people actually appear some of the least pessimistic about politics in practice, although their scores overall remain low. The results are especially surprising given assumptions that young people will also feel under-represented and potentially overlooked by politicians in their policy appeals (Dalton 2006; Sloam 2013, 2014a; Marsh et al 2007; Levine and Cureton 1998). This supply-side issue could exacerbate tendencies towards being critical. With fieldwork conducted in the summer of 2011 following the failure of protests against university tuition fee increases, it becomes even more puzzling. Such a contextual factor would be expected to raise disaffection, as witnessed within more radical networks of student occupations (Ibrahim 2011: 420). Instead, the results find many young people still demonstrated a level of faith in politicians at this time which was not observed to the same degree in other groups. In contrast to Putnam's social capital theory (2000; Dalton 2005; Hall 1999; see Henn et al

³⁶ Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for each variable indicate the data are not normally distributed and therefore require non-parametric analysis.

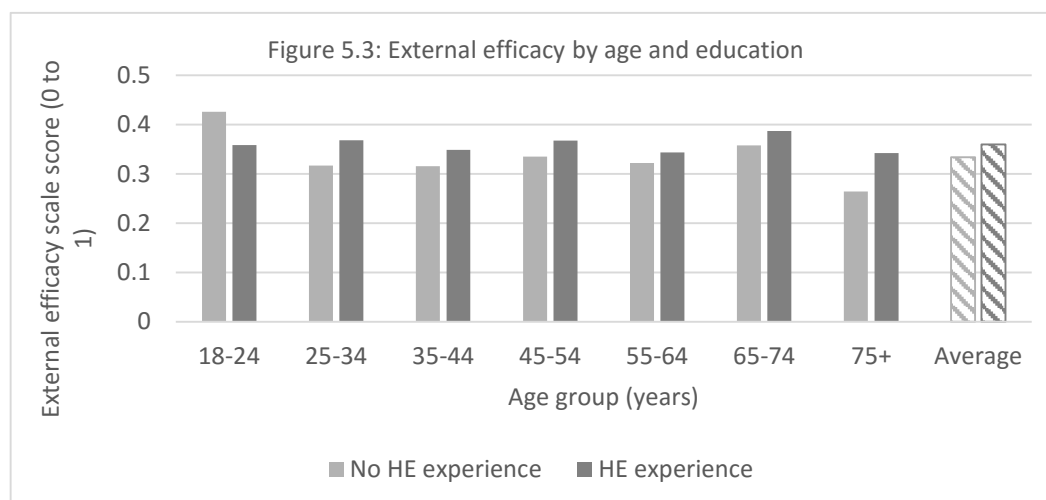
2007), young people are seemingly not the least trusting either. This implies more recent generations are not always suffering in this regard despite increasing individualisation in society. Again, there is some optimism associated with youth even if they remain more negative than positive.

These findings are made clearer by creating comparable scales of external efficacy and political responsiveness and calculating average scores, using the components and bi-categorisation in Table C1.³⁷ From doing so, young people are again the most positive, scoring higher than any other age group on both measures. Comparing 18-24 year olds to all other electors (aged 25 years+), on external efficacy there is a difference between means of .04. It appears small but with a scale from just 0 to 1 the difference is more notable. A Mann-Whitney U test, similarly finds a significant difference; young people (Mdn = .44) and those over 25 years (Mdn = .34), $U=64137.5$, $p=.005$. The same is true for political responsiveness; 18-24 year olds (Mdn = .39), 25 years+ (Mdn = .36), $U=66978$, $p=.002$. On the basis of these results, focused on absolute forms of criticism, there is therefore little support for the preliminary proposition that disaffection is more prevalent among young people. Claims that low youth turnout results from young people being the most critical group in the electorate are under-supported. Equally, it suggests that being more educated (again, in absolute terms) or simply being part of a more educated cohort is not necessarily associated with greater criticism. Disaffection is an electorate-wide issue with all age groups demonstrating negative perceptions of politics.

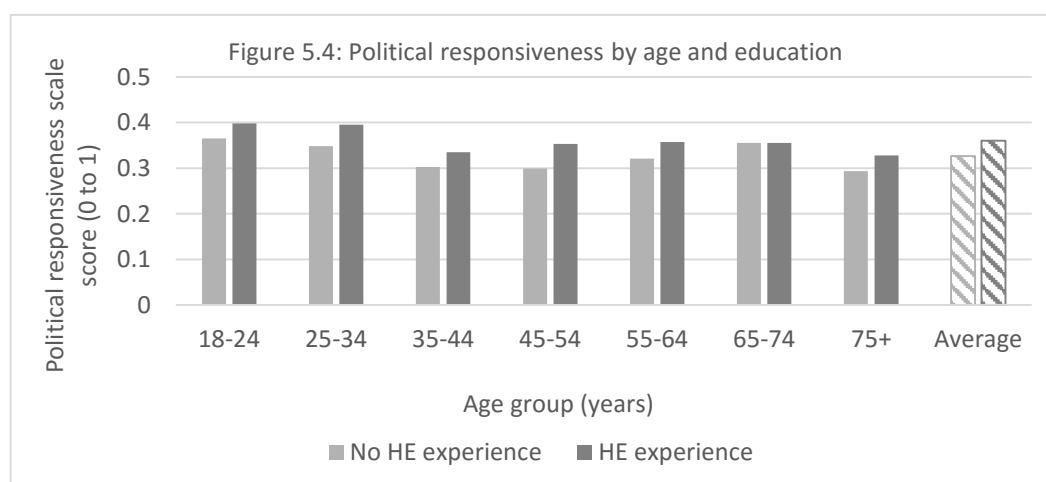
By disaggregating the results further using a dummy variable of HE experience (which identifies current and graduated HE students), in most cases – the exception being for 18-24 year olds on external efficacy – individuals with HE experience report more positive judgements than those without (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). While we must be cautious due to small sample sizes which emerge once the data are broken down to this level, it offers some initial support for arguing that while educated individuals possess an ability to be critical of politics – observed in their still fairly low scores – it can be mediated by other considerations. For example, unlike the non-HE group which is believed to be increasingly side-lined and thus have additional reasons to be pessimistic, an HE population might feel politics is at least representative of their demographic and so

³⁷ Standardised to vary between zero (very negative perceptions) and one (very positive perceptions).

responsive to some of their interests. Following the 2015 general election for instance, nine in ten UK MPs were university graduates (Times Higher Education 2015). Politicians can subsequently be viewed as more accessible and in tune with the concerns of educated electors, appearing to offer fairer representation and be more trustworthy in promises to pursue promoted policies. This could reduce criticism and help explain a positive relationship between education and latent commitment to voting. The propositions of the sorting model further help explain these patterns; social network centrality enjoyed by more educated individuals positions them among politically important circles to give them greater access to decision-makers (Nie et al 1996). This could raise external efficacy while lowering it among non-HE individuals. Expectations on the negative impact of educational expansion in exacerbating feelings of marginalisation and cynicism among the less well-educated are supported.



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; n = 1006



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; n = 1082

For those in the youngest age group, however, individuals without HE experience report more external efficacy than any other group in the analysis. This counters the view that as one of the most socially excluded groups they should feel relatively powerless in politics. It also challenges ideas that if any young people are going to feel efficacious, it would be those accessing participation opportunities through their HE campus experiences. This result could reflect a level of question misunderstanding or alternatively indicate already the impact of relative judgements in individuals' perception. If their expectations for influence are low, they may not perceive institutional opportunities so negatively. As stated, however, sample sizes are small with only 99 and 98 18-24 year olds in total for external efficacy and political responsiveness scales, respectively. The educational differences are also not statistically significant within any age group, supporting the view that it is possible to become disaffected through mechanisms associated both with attending and not attending university. However, with young people of any background being some of the most positive, it suggests disaffection might actually be negatively associated with a lower aggregate education level. In contrast and against expectations, individuals with more political experience – thought to be obtained with age – and a lower average education level are most critical.

5.3. Relative disaffection: a democratic deficit?

From the analysis so far it is not possible to claim young people are the most pessimistic consumers of politics in Britain based on absolute assessments of how it operates. As I argue in my original development of the disaffected citizenry model, however, disaffection can and should also be thought of in relative terms. The model predicts not only that young people are more critical of politics but that relative to democratic ideals and aspirations, this criticism can appear more damning – particularly among those with more education. If an elector does not aim for an active role in politics, a low level of external efficacy may represent a more indifferent approach versus one of active disaffection. A perceived lack of influence may not be viewed as a negative trait if an individual does not believe non-experts and members of the public should be heavily involved in policy making, although it may reinforce a feeling of distance. Conversely, if young people's ideals for politics appear greater than those of other age groups, this higher level of internal efficacy and greater demand for representation in politics may generate a more pronounced form of criticism. This is particularly where and why

disaffection among an HE group is anticipated to emerge. For Seyd, this would be comparable to political disappointment, defined as 'the discrepancy between what someone expects from politics and what they perceive they actually get' (2016: 327). While Seyd has focused on policy performance and the role of the state – for example, healthcare and job provision – a similar approach is applicable to electors' assessments of political processes and participation more broadly.

In Norris' cross-national comparisons of citizen values she considers mean levels of democratic aspiration and democratic satisfaction before observing the gap between the two. Where the former is high and the latter low, a large deficit emerges and it is here that criticism of the political system will come to have an effect on political participation (2011: 119-141). Interestingly, this study using World Values Survey data, 2005-2007, finds democratic aspirations are often marginally stronger among older generations. This is to some extent at odds with a view that social modernisation and educational expansion leads to more democratically minded societies (see Helliwell and Putnam 2007). It is, however, consistent with thoughts that following the Second World War and during the Cold War, individuals who are now in these older age groups entered the electorate at a time when many sought to see democracy victorious over authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, different understandings of democracy could still be influenced by changes in education with individual educational experiences then explaining some of these findings.

For example, Webb finds in the BPS evidence of a stealth democrat who is typically less well-educated and tends to hold largely authoritarian values, yet is quite in favour of referendums as a form of active public engagement in decision-making. In contrast, more highly educated individuals tend to favour a range of participation options, indicative of support for different types of democracy, including representative, deliberative, and non-electoral participatory (2013: 759-64). I argue again that it is necessary to move beyond using a single variable focused on democratic satisfaction as Norris prioritises in her creation of a democratic deficit score. My expectation is that young people, especially those with HE experience – an ever growing group – will possess higher ideals for the operation of representative democracy. Encouragement of self-actualisation and provision of citizenship education should see them having higher demands of politicians. In turn they will find current practices are failing to meet their requirements. This reflects the move from duty-based to engaged citizenship (Dalton 2008a) and with the

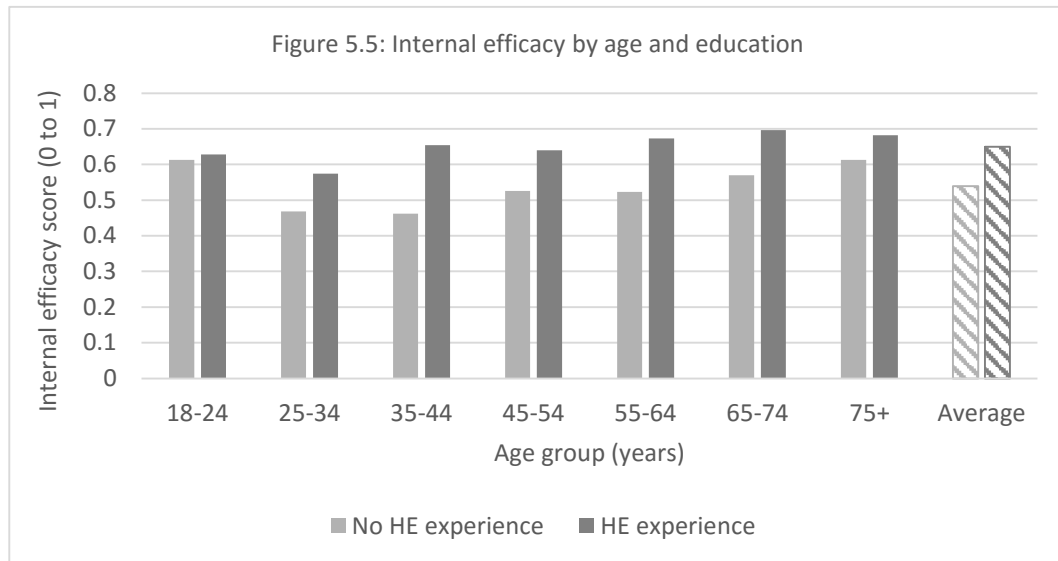
HE population growing, should be evidenced by higher prevalence among young people. It is to some extent expected for non-HE young people too, although to a lesser degree due to their absence from politically mobilising networks which would reinforce interest in politics.

For internal efficacy, differences between HE and non-HE young people should be more marked. While it is assumed individuals with HE experience view themselves as capable of participating in politics, buoyed by the confidence conferred by their experience of a more privileged university career, non-HE individuals will likely consider themselves less capable. Their relative education status is falling as the HE population grows so they could judge their skills and ability as less easily transferable to the field of politics when assessing this against their peers (Condon and Holleque 2013). Thus, while they can still share some similarities in democratic ideals – promoted through the type of emancipatory education now being increasingly delivered and promoted – they may not possess equal confidence in their ability to participate. Their deficit should be smaller. Differences between age groups on this, however, may be less evident. Young people with HE, for instance, have educational advantages against many older electors and non-HE counterparts. Their youth can nevertheless generate additional disadvantages, for example relating to first-time voter status, which may weaken their confidence and so counter the HE advantage.

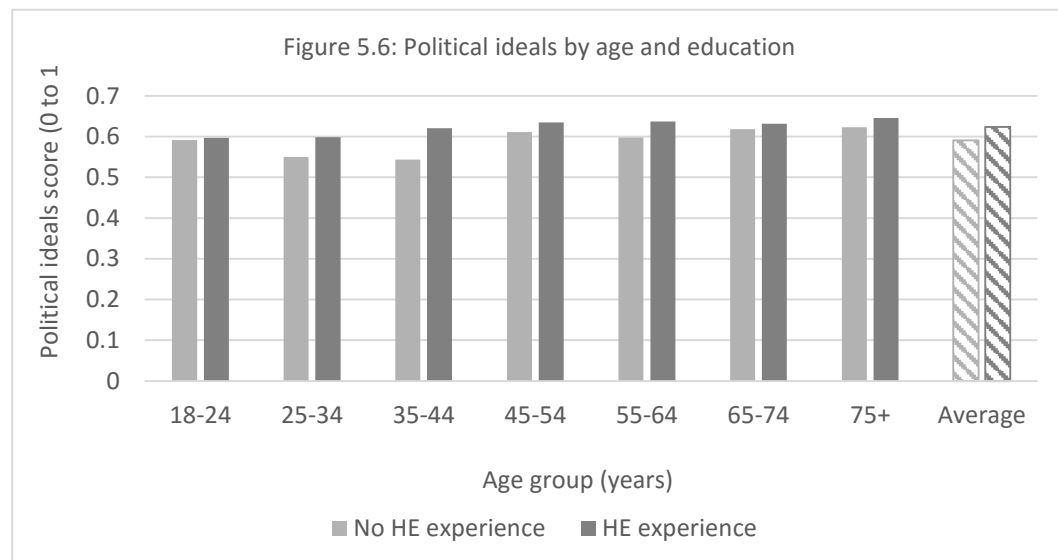
To examine the ways in which disaffection presents in the population, I have devised comparable scales of internal efficacy and political ideals compiled from the BPS, coded between zero and one. As detailed in Table C2 (Appendix C), internal efficacy is designed here to record how capable an individual believes they can be in politics based on an assessment of their own ability and skill as a political actor and including subjective judgements where they compare themselves to others. A high internal efficacy score implies individuals are wholly confident in their ability to participate. A low score indicates a belief that necessary skills and knowledge are lacking. This can be matched against external efficacy to estimate the degree to which individuals believe they can realise their own political participation potential through existing structures. If they do not believe opportunities exist for influencing political decisions, they will feel dissatisfied and potentially even look to alternative activities. Although, as suggested, an external efficacy component may already capture perceived alternative participation potential. The political ideals scale comprises respondents' views on how politics should

be organised and practiced within representative democracy, including the role ordinary individuals should be allowed to play between elections as well as the principles by which political parties and elected officials should seek to govern by. On this a score of one suggests the need for open debate, voter say, and fair representation while a score of zero would indicate opinions that electors should play a minimal role. These ideals can therefore be contrasted against how responsive and fair the political system is perceived as being in its implementing representative democracy.

By adopting a similar approach to that above, Figures 5.5 and 5.6 demonstrate variation across age and education groups on the combined scales of internal efficacy and political ideals. Individuals with HE experience appear to become more efficacious over the life-course. Whether this results from life-cycle aging or being part of an older generation cannot be discerned from a cross-sectional study but there does appear to be a largely positive relationship between age and internal efficacy for those respondents with HE experience. It might be expected that as individuals age they naturally acquire more knowledge of politics, gain experience, and so feel more competent. Young people as a whole however – combining both HE and non-HE – possess some of the greatest confidence in their own ability to participate. While this is expected among the HE group the main contributor to this overall youth finding is the relatively high internal efficacy reported by non-HE young people. In almost every other age group, non-HE respondents are much further removed from their HE counterparts; significant differences between education groups exist among all but the very youngest and very oldest age groups (Mann-Whitney U Test, $p < .05$). This contradicts the original proposition that non-HE young people today, through a self-fulfilling prophecy related to their increasingly marginalised position, feel less capable than their HE peers and to a greater extent than witnessed in other age groups. It even suggests formal educational expansion and political education initiatives may have had a desired effect in reducing inequality in political literacy, although these indicators are based on self-assessment rather than objective political knowledge tests. Arguably, however, a personal assessment of knowledge or skill will likely have greater impact on participation than actual knowledge. Knowledge itself can less likely make someone more participative. It acts by affecting perceptions of self and politics (see Galston 2001: 223-4).



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; n = 1101



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; n = 1140

On political ideals, the contrast between the expectations of my hypotheses and respondents' actual recorded opinions is even more marked. Young people as a whole possess some of the lowest scores, suggesting minimal expectations of democracy, and again there is relatively little to distinguish between the two educational groups (Mann-Whitney U Test, $p > .05$). The implication is that young people are some of the least demanding electors, seemingly true irrespective of educational experience. Such findings would not necessarily be out of character for non-HE young people who could find any ideals promoted through their extended (even if non-university) education encountering

weaker reinforcement while they remain outwith more politicised networks. However, it contradicts views in the literature that young, highly educated individuals hold higher democratic standards for representative democracy than older individuals, assumed to stem from their enjoying *both* extended education and social reinforcement (Inglehart 1990; Dalton 2008a, 2008b).

As I have argued, however, these expectation indicators are most useful for understanding turnout when matched against electors' perceptions and experiences. They provide a way of assessing *relative* criticism. For dissatisfied-disaffection, the gap should be large – high expectations with negative perceptions. For alienated-disaffection it would be narrower and yet start from an overall more negative position – more ambivalent expectations with negative perceptions. Using the scores above, I develop the approaches of Norris (2011: 31) and Seyd (2016: 331) to calculate two deficit test variables; an efficacy deficit and democratic principles versus practice deficit (referred to here as a responsiveness deficit). Unlike Norris, this reflects the combined attitude scales rather than focusing solely on democratic satisfaction while it extends beyond Seyd's study which considers specific policy domains and outputs. The deficit scores are nevertheless generated in the same way, by subtracting perceptions from expectations. Each scale can obtain a maximum score of one, a point at which expectations are high and perceptions low, and a minimum score of minus one when expectations are low and perceptions high. Distributions of the resultant scores across the sample both reveal negative skews; it is more common to experience a deficit allied to high expectations and negative perceptions rather than a neutral position or positive perceptions deficit. Against expectations but in line with the results above, by taking external efficacy from internal efficacy, and responsiveness from ideals, young people as a whole do not report the greatest disparity; their ideas about how politics should operate and their role in it are not high enough – nor their satisfaction low enough – to generate a larger deficit.

On efficacy, young people record a mean deficit of .24 so matching the sample average, while on a responsiveness deficit they record the second smallest gap, a mean of only .21 compared to an average of .26. Therefore, even where they hold negative views of politics, this is not amplified by any especially high expectations. There is no clear evidence of political frustration being more prolific, for example, in the youth population as anticipated with the higher proportion of HE individuals. Moreover, with no significant differences between the scores of HE and non-HE young people on the deficit,

distinguishing between them in this way may not be the most helpful approach. If there is an efficacy tension among young people it is not limited only to those with HE experience. Within the BPS sample as a whole, however, the efficacy deficit is on average higher for individuals with HE, suggesting frustration between participation expectations and reality can be prominent here, a mean of .29 versus one of just .21 for those without (Mann-Whitney U Test, $p < .05$). In contrast, for the responsiveness deficit the difference is much smaller with non-HE expressing views consistent with only a marginally higher deficit at .27 versus .26 (Mann-Whitney U Test, $p > .05$). Thus, while this non-HE sample may not feel dissatisfied to the same extent as HE individuals on their level of influence they are similar in their experiencing a disjuncture between their ideals for representative democracy and its actual performance. This offers some support for the expectations of my framework where efficacy issues are a stronger distinguishing feature between educational groups than responsiveness perceptions.

5.4. Determining disaffection

To understand the determinants of disaffection in the British electorate in more detail, I use ordinary least squares regression. With each of the four original scales and the two corresponding deficits being measured on scales approximating interval-level data, this is an appropriate method for observing any potential relationships and predicting deficit scores for specified individuals (see Seyd 2016). It is employed here to consider the significance of age and education in shaping individuals' attitudes when controlling for each other, as well as when including additional controls which are also thought to shape attitudes towards politics within a given context.

Firstly, this involves the inclusion of demographic characteristics in gender and ethnicity. Today, gender is assumed to be less significant than age and education, in many studies often having only a small impact, if any, on turnout (see Smets and van Ham 2013: 348). However, the historical position of women in politics (and society) and continued under-representation could still see turnout being lower among females and in discussions of disaffection and participation attitudes, women feeling less confident and perceiving fewer opportunities for influence. Similarly, BME individuals, while not a homogenous group, may in their position as a minority face issues associated with marginalisation, which can inspire a more critical perspective. For this reason, I employ a dummy variable capturing minority status with 'White British' being the comparison category. A study

where ethnicity is the focus would clearly require more disaggregation but for the purposes of this research, it is this minority position which is of most interest.

As the specified model of mechanisms requires, I also include an indicator on the strength of individuals' partisanship recorded on a self-report three-point scale between zero and one of 'not very strong', 'fairly strong', and 'very strong'. Individuals who strongly identify with any party are assumed to possess more faith in politics and feel better represented by the actors involved (Heath 2007). They identify with political elites, should be more aware of policy developments, and possess greater understanding of how to reach politicians. It can also control for the possibility the individual has developed habits and loyalties which can make them view politics more negatively or positively, following a similar logic to Campbell et al's (1960) funnel of causality, where pre-existing allegiances can colour any attitudes towards politics. In addition, while the direction of the causal relationship is contested, internal efficacy would also be assumed to be higher among partisans; either they feel more capable of following politics, and so are confident in identifying a party to support, or the act of following a party in itself boosts their political awareness and makes politics seem more accessible.

Finally, there is a variable capturing politicisation in individuals' social networks – again, a key feature of the overarching model to be tested throughout this thesis, later with regards to turnout. Individuals are assumed to be more likely to vote when their social networks set these norms of behaviour and offer further encouragement in the practical act of doing so. The mobilised voter might be disaffected and yet their exposure to pro-voting behaviours prompts them to vote on polling day. The chosen indicator uses respondents' agreement with the statement, 'Most of my family and friends think that voting is a waste of time' (5-point Likert agreement scale responses, reverse coded, 0=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree). It is anticipated that while influential on turnout, this will be less significant a determinant of disaffection, and that criticism can exist even among those for whom voting is viewed as an important activity. However, if an individual's friends and family consider voting a waste of time, there is an implicit message that politics as a whole might be being negatively judged. This attitude can be transferred, for example from parents to children, and so see criticism emerge as a result. The regressions are presented in Tables 5.1 (original scales) and 5.2 (deficit scales).

	External efficacy		Internal efficacy		Responsiveness		Ideals	
	b (s.e)	beta	b (s.e)	beta	b (s.e)	beta	b (s.e)	beta
Gender (base = female)								
Ethnicity (base = BME)	.001 (.012)	.004	.107 (.012)***	.261	.017 (.010)*	.053	.003 (.007)	.014
Educational status (base = no HE)	.011 (.018)	.022	-.012 (.019)	-.019	.059 (.015)***	.123	-.006 (.010)	-.019
Age	.001 (.012)	.002	.088 (.013)***	.215	.021 (.011)**	.065	.020 (.007)***	.094
	-.001 (.000)***	-.087	.000 (.000)	.033	-.001 (.000)***	-.085	.001 (.000)***	.101
Party supporter (high = very strong)	.095 (.017)***	.192	.159 (.018)***	.267	-.008 (.015)	-.018	.043 (.010)***	.139
Friends and family think voting is a waste of time (high = strongly disagree)	.092 (.019)***	.167	.029 (.020)	.044	.156 (.017)***	.301	.045 (.011)***	.133
Constant	.306 (.028)***		.428 (.029)***		.239 (.024)***		.539 (.016)***	
Model significance (F statistic)	9.972***		39.043***		20.666***		9.809***	
Adjusted R²	.061		.204		.118		.055	
N	824		893		881		912	

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout, ***p<.01, **p.05, * p<.1

Table 5.2: Ordinary Least Squares regression: correlates of efficacy deficit and responsiveness deficit

	<i>Efficacy deficit</i>		<i>Responsiveness deficit</i>	
	b (s.e)	beta	b (s.e)	beta
Gender (base = female)	.099 (.016)***	.214	-.018 (.012)	-.049
Ethnicity (base = BME)	-.033 (.024)	-.046	-.066 (.018)***	-.120
Educational status (base = no HE)	.084 (.016)***	.181	-.001 (.012)	-.002
Age	.001 (.000)***	.095	.001 (.000)***	.122
Party supporter (high = very strong)	.056 (.023)**	.084	.052 (.018)***	.097
Friends and family think voting is a waste of time (high = strongly disagree)	-.061 (.025)**	-.081	-.116 (.020)***	-.195
Constant	.142 (.038)***		.313 (.029)***	
Model significance (F statistic)	16.461***		12.430***	
Adjusted R²	.103		.073	
N	807		874	

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout,

***p<.01, **p.05, * p<.1

Overall, age is negatively associated with both external efficacy and perceived responsiveness in Table 5.1. Further analysis finds that when disaggregated into seven age groups (those used previously), this hint of linearity is further evident. 18-24 year olds are the most externally efficacious and the second most positive age group on responsiveness, beaten only on this by individuals aged 25-34 years. Therefore, even when combining these factors and controlling for additional variation, the patterns seen previously are repeated. There are suggestions young people feel politics is open to their influence to a greater degree than is felt by others. It will be important to reflect on this in Chapter 6 when I test whether this tendency among young people is further reflected in a stronger predisposition towards a more alternative participation repertoire.

Internal efficacy, however, is unaffected by age in this particular model while on ideals, we see a positive relationship in which the principles against which politics and democracy are likely to be judged become higher with age. Although, exploring this over age groups suggests it is not wholly linear with 45-55 year olds, for instance, being the most demanding on ideals while many age groups are not significantly different from 18-24 year olds in their responses.

Education boosts internal efficacy, as would be expected. The standardised coefficients, combined with the highest adjusted R^2 figure across the four models in Table 5.1, implies it is particularly important in determining whether an individual feels competent and confident in politics. Interestingly, HE experience also corresponds with a lower responsiveness score. This offers support for the idea that criticism can develop even among more advantaged groups and that education itself can encourage individuals to challenge established practices and find fault.

Partisanship acts largely in the anticipated way, having a positive influence on all but responsiveness (where the negative finding is insignificant). If an individual identifies strongly with a party they are more likely to believe they can exert influence in politics, have the personal capacity to do so, and hold high ideals on how representative democracy should operate. Political parties would appear to provide supporters with feelings of influence, perhaps offering more direct channels through which to have a say on policy. As stated, for internal efficacy and ideals, the causal direction is less clear. Being supportive of democracy in principle and feeling able to participate could inspire individuals to seek out parties to support. Alternatively, party supporters could come to feel more capable and demanding of democracy as they learn more about politics through their partisanship. Either way, the measure is a useful in exploring the likely mobilisation force associated with partisanship, even if it is not 'causing' the scale score.

The impact of pro-voting friends and family is also evident in external efficacy, responsiveness, and ideals. Being around politicised individuals appears to improve perceptions of politics, and heighten the principles a potential elector holds on the ways in which it should operate. It is less effective, however, in making individuals themselves feel politically competent. Internal efficacy therefore comes forward here as a more independent judgement by the individual, based on their own learning and experience, rather than being influenced by the encouragement (or discouragement) of their wider networks.

Gender and ethnicity demonstrate fairly limited effects, although men appear to be more internally efficacious than women, while individuals identifying as BME are more critical than White British on issues of responsiveness. Both findings are in line with wider literature.

On the deficit scales (Table 5.2), the first point to observe is the relatively weak model fit for both; adjusted R^2 figures suggesting only 10.3 and 7.3 per cent of variation in each deficit can be explained by the chosen independent variables. It is interesting that on their own, age and education, and the chosen controls, do not explain more. Education is nevertheless significant in increasing the sense of an efficacy deficit by .084. Thus, we can observe that individuals with higher levels of education hold attitudes more consistent with dissatisfied disaffection Table 5.1 has shown they are much more confident in their own ability to play a direct role in politics and so even with marginally higher external efficacy the disparity between what they expect for political participation opportunities and what they believe they actually experience is much greater. This is not the case for non-HE individuals. They do not exhibit frustration to the same extent, their lower scores suggesting an approach closer to neutral. They are perhaps more willing to accept a detached role in politics, not believing they are capable of participating, so not finding a perceived lack of influence overly troubling.

Contrastingly, where disaffection exists on a responsiveness deficit indicator, variation is not apparent between educational groups. We know from the component scale regressions in Table 5.1 that HE individuals have higher opinions of political responsiveness and higher ideals. It might be suggested that while the deficit does not vary, the absolute levels upon which it is based differ in such a way that there is greater criticism and detachment among non-HE individuals.

Age appears to have consistent positive effects for both deficits. Young people will therefore report typically lower deficit scores suggesting the tension between reality and expectations is less pronounced in this group. However, disaggregation to the seven age groups finds the differences between them and others are rarely significant enough to offer a notable linear pattern. This again implies that while disaffection is present within the electorate and can in its various forms be connected to education, it is not necessarily something which is more prevalent among the youth population as a more educated group and one which faces additional youth disadvantages. The models for both deficits were re-run to include interactions between age and education but no significant effects were found, indicating that where effects exist they are consistent across the sample, at least on the variables of interest. Equally, it suggests education does not moderate the effect of age, or vice versa. On the basis of these small samples (when such a level of

disaggregation is applied), distinguishing between educational groups within a single age constituency is not supported.

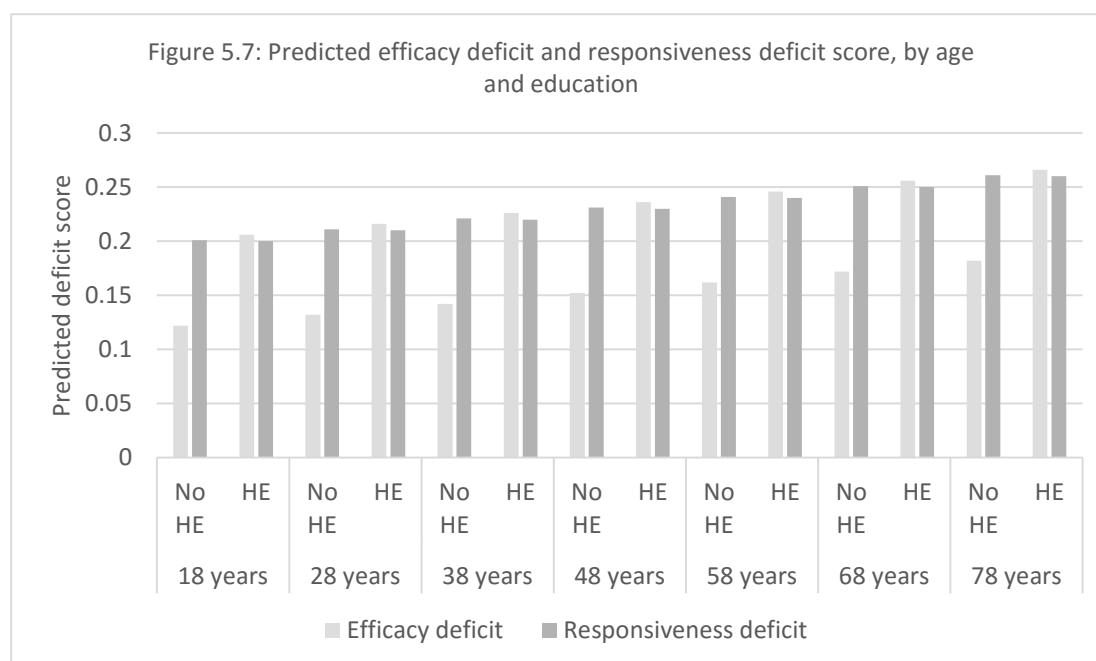
Being a strong partisan is associated with a higher efficacy deficit score. Individuals who feel connected to politics through parties can still often feel that this does not give them the influence they believe they are able to and should be exerting. Political parties may not be performing a satisfactory role for many individuals in providing opportunities for shaping policy, some influence perhaps being felt but not enough to satisfy their ambitions. The erosion of parties' youth wings, for example (Russell 2005). Greater disaffection on the responsiveness deficit, however, is associated with being a party supporter. This may, in part, relate to party preferences.

For example, fieldwork for the BPS was conducted in 2011 and so it might be assumed individuals identifying as Conservatives would be more positive about the responsiveness of government and their own levels of influence, given the party's leading role in the coalition government formed after the 2010 general election. However, being in coalition itself might cause disappointment. Labour supporters may be more predisposed to being critical in their perceptions of politics due to their party's position in opposition and its exercising less power in setting the political agenda. Similarly, supporters of smaller and/or regional parties would be expected to report more negative opinions of politics at a national level in 2011 with their chosen parties being only minor players in policy making, if at all. Liberal Democrats, as a member of the coalition might feel more satisfied than others, although with early manifesto promises reneged on, such as the abolition of university tuition fees, the relationship may be one more of dissatisfaction. This latter suggestion could be more likely since we know that throughout their time in coalition support for the party fell considerably, culminating in the loss of 49 seats in the 2015 general election (Hawkins et al 2015: 3). For young people this is evidenced further with support among students specifically falling from 50 per cent at the 2010 general election to just 8 per cent in May 2013 (Snelling 2013). In this way, being a strong partisan could still see feelings of frustration develop.

Pro-voting friends and family sees lower deficit scores emerge. Such networks may, therefore, reduce likely criticism of politics and support a more positive attitude. In this way, it might be important for turnout both directly and indirectly. Females record a lower efficacy deficit (their internal efficacy being lower than that of men) while they

record a higher responsiveness deficit score, suggesting a greater level of frustration directed at politics representativeness. This latter finding on responsiveness is also true of BME respondents, as expected, but this does not seem to be a significant determinant in individuals' efficacy considerations.

By applying the results of the analysis to defined individuals, characterised here by being female, White British, 'fairly strong' party supporters, and in pro-voting networks, Figure 5.7 presents predicted deficit scores for each age and education group calculated using the respective regression equations. When controlling for all these factors, young people still report some of the lowest deficit scores which are indicative of lower rates of disaffection. Individuals with HE experience also report higher efficacy deficit scores than responsiveness deficits – but only very marginally – while individuals with no HE experience typically see the responsiveness deficit being much higher. This further supports the view that responsiveness is an area of disaffection which is more notable for non-HE individuals and efficacy concerns the disaffection area most significant for HE individuals.



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; based on analysis in Table 5.2; n = 807 (efficacy deficit), 874 (responsiveness deficit); assumes individual is female, White British, 'fairly strong' party supporter, and strongly disagrees on friends and family thinking voting is a waste of time.

There are clear issues associated with adopting this deficit scale approach in the analysis. Unlike Seyd (2016) who is able to measure disappointment using variables which relate

directly to each other, based on expectations and experiences for specific policies, my analysis is based on assumptions of how the four initial scales relate to each other. For example, it assumes that someone who is internally efficacious will always want to exert influence in politics and therefore engages in an internal process in which they judge their external efficacy against this. This level of sophistication and linking of issues by the respondent may not be a wholly accurate representation of their political participation attitudes, since it requires them to view internal and external efficacy as a complementary pair in the same way that I as a researcher am using them. Equally, my method assumes responsiveness can and should be viewed differently from external efficacy. This may be true for some individuals but not for others who are perhaps more likely to conflate the two. A strong alpha of .781 (ranging from .738 to .809 across the seven age groups) for a 12-item disaffection scale combining both external efficacy and responsiveness indicators, for example, certainly suggests there may be similarities across them in how they are viewed by the sample.

However, by matching internal efficacy with external efficacy and ideals with responsiveness perceptions, rather than relying on a single expectations scale and a single experiences scale, I am bringing theoretically-linked concepts together while also allowing the analysis to be sophisticated in recognising the concepts' distinct features. External efficacy is not, for example, the same as political responsiveness (Esaiasson et al 2015), the former being more general and the latter more context specific, with issues of trust also being incorporated. Despite indications of similarities in responses it remains important to distinguish between them, particularly when aiming to uncover how, when, and why disaffection can moderate individual education's impact on participation. The scales still also provide an indication of how politics is viewed and approached by an individual while it is not overly elaborate to suggest these attitudes are in some way connected and impact on each other. For example, by using several scales of democratic attitudes, Webb makes comparisons between groups and can see how different ideas about democracy combine or contrast. This demonstrates how attitude scales might be brought together to investigate an individual's political character and resultant preferences (2013). The scales remain useful in providing information on individuals' overarching approaches and, by ensuring each is studied in isolation as well as within the eventual deficits scales, I am able to draw inferences on specifically where any variation is being observed, and why.

Ultimately, however, the results suggest young people are not more disaffected than other, older electors on either responsiveness considerations or efficacy ones. In some respects, they can even be more positive, this being especially true of external efficacy and to a lesser extent, political responsiveness. Consequently, on a test of attitude prevalence alone, young people appear indistinct.

5.5. Disaffection among young people

Before testing the relationship between disaffection and turnout, I want to extend the above analysis with CITS data to consider points of variation *within* the youth electorate.³⁸ Evidently young people as a whole are not more disaffected than other, older electors. They are, however, in many respects still displaying signs of disaffection. No age group reports being especially positive when reflecting on the performance and operation of formal politics. Due to relatively small sample sizes it has not been possible to examine nuance within this, for instance how education might work in different ways to generate particular types of youth disaffection. The CITS, with a large youth-only sample, allows me to investigate education's relationship with disaffection further. I once more establish measures of disaffection referring both to perceptions and expectations. While the dataset has the advantages of offering a larger youth sample and more youth-relevant variables there are still arguably fewer indicators covering concepts of external efficacy, internal efficacy, democratic ideals, and political responsiveness than were available in the BPS. For this reason, I necessarily concentrate on efficacy (internal *and* external) and responsiveness, with less consideration of democratic ideals (presented in Table 5.3). Despite not offering the possibility of true replication between the two surveys (see Hancké 2009: 90-1), the variable selections bear satisfactory resemblance to those used previously and continue to capture concepts found within my proposed framework. They remain useful for assessing how capable individuals feel within politics (relating to internal efficacy) as well as how much influence and voice they believe they can exert and enjoy (relating to external efficacy) and their perceptions of the political world (trust and responsiveness).³⁹ However, with far fewer 'expectations' variables, it

³⁸ For greater precision on youth turnout misreporting, CITS data weighted throughout analysis using youth turnout weight for 2010 based on 44% turnout (Ipsos-MORI 2010) unless specified otherwise.

³⁹ Statement variables had original answers recorded on five-point Likert agreement scales. Figures in Table 5.3 refer to percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing. Exceptions are the two trust variables, originally measured on four-point scales from no trust at all to complete trust. Statistics presented correspond to the proportion claiming to trust politicians and government quite a lot or completely.

is not appropriate to calculate a deficit score. Instead, I compare the absolute rates by way of an indication of relevant variation.

Table 5.3: External and internal efficacy variables across educational groups and correlated with turnout at the 2010 UK General Election

Variable	% strongly agree and agree (<u>trust</u> variables: % quite a lot and completely)				
	Non-student	On course students			Non-student
	No HE/FE	FE	HE (UG)	HE (PG)	HE Graduate
External efficacy					
People like me can have real influence on government if they get involved (infgov1)*	28.1 (160)	29.9 (57)	39.6 (153)	38.0 (62)	34.8 (84)
When local people campaign together they can help to solve problems in the community (loccam1)*	56.7 (327)	56.8 (109)	69.3 (274)	62.8 (103)	70.6 (173)
My views are not taken seriously in my neighbourhood (viewsR1)*	25.4 (134)	24.0 (41)	24.2 (84)	17.2 (25)	14.60 (32)
Responsiveness					
Politics makes no difference to people my age (nodiffR1)*	15.8 (93)	15.5 (31)	10.0 (41)	17.1 (28)	10.1 (25)
How much do you <u>trust</u> politicians? (trustpol)*	5.6 (34)	12.5 (24)	8.1 (33)	6.1 (10)	7.2 (18)
How much do you <u>trust</u> government? (trustgov)*	7.8 (46)	19.4 (37)	17.0 (67)	11.1 (18)	14.2 (35)
Internal efficacy					
Sometimes politics seems so complicated I cannot understand what's going on (complir1)*	65.4 (400)	63.3 (129)	57.7 (238)	52.1 (87)	58.7 (149)
I know less about politics than most people my age (knowR1)*	28.8 (169)	25.6 (51)	20.3 (81)	21.7 (36)	15.7 (41)

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI); weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), counts in parentheses, *Chi-square test $p < .05$

The CITS data in some ways corroborate the findings of the BPS. The views of young people towards politics and their participation are fairly mixed and significantly for this thesis, not inherently negative. They are generally optimistic, for example, on the impact of local campaigns. From recoding the responses on scales from zero to one, the sample average is .65 ($s=.21$), more positive than negative. However, they do not believe they can exert influence on government through their own involvement, a similar scale

recording an average of just .49 ($s=.27$). This suggests, perhaps on balance, a more pessimistic assessment of external efficacy since of all the variables this is arguably the most closely related to a question of political voice at a national level. Moreover, levels of trust are very low with averages of just .18 ($s=.22$) for politicians and .23 ($s=.25$) for government. Therefore, at a national level, relating to general elections and Westminster politics, young people could be seen as more negative than positive in their perceptions.

On internal efficacy, while many do not perceive themselves as especially inferior to others (*knowR1*) – typically only a fifth to a quarter – a majority still find it difficult to understand politics (*compliR1*). This is suggestive of general feelings that their own knowledge of politics and skills to engage are low. It undermines the idea that with their additional education and access to explicit citizenship learning, young people feel more capable of participating. Young people's attitudes do not unequivocally present as a case of reality failing to meet expectations. The responses nevertheless still imply that there exists a level of dissatisfaction since the political system is deemed too difficult to engage with intellectually. Arguably this could also be demonstrative of disaffection, albeit indirectly.

In an assessment of variation within the sample, responses for external efficacy indicate a predominantly HE versus non-HE divide, similar to that witnessed in the wider electorate. Students currently in HE (both undergraduate and postgraduate) are most likely to believe they have political influence while alongside graduates, undergraduate students are more likely to possess faith in the effectiveness of local political campaigns to precipitate change. On both variables, average scores for FE students and individuals with no post-compulsory schooling are fairly similar. This suggests there is no educational advantage connected to additional years spent in education if they are not experienced within an HE setting. It supports my contention that when young people are located outwith universities and miss out on the prestige and status it can afford, it might generate feelings of political marginalisation and a sense of politics being inaccessible. 'More' education alone appears unable raise external efficacy. The type of education and where it is delivered is seemingly more impactful (see Janmaat et al 2014; Hoskins et al 2016).

Differentiation between educational groups is less evident even if significant for the remaining external efficacy and responsiveness variables (absolute disaffection

indicators). HE graduates appear least critical on the two negative statements – their lower scores suggestive of disagreement – and yet there is no clear student and/or HE advantage witnessed for the remaining groups. Postgraduates, for example, are most likely to believe politics makes no difference to them, at a rate closest to that of non-HE individuals, while undergraduates are some of the least optimistic on their views being taken seriously within their neighbourhoods. Similarly, variation in trust is inconsistent from a linear perspective, despite significance. FE students have some of the highest levels of trust in both politicians and government, followed by undergraduates. This is unexpected given the timing of the survey and its following the raising of tuition fees by a coalition government in which one party, the Liberal Democrats, had promised their abolition. However, trust is still low and it is those young people with no post-compulsory schooling who, as anticipated from a marginalisation effect, are the least trusting and so most cynical about MPs' behaviours.

For internal efficacy, a clear divide between HE and non-HE reappears with positive education effects. Individuals reporting either on-course or past HE experience are more confident in their own abilities. This supports general expectations for within-age group variation where education can, for example, confer political skills and knowledge (Verba et al 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Hillygus 2005; Gallego 2009, 2010, 2015) or even simply confidence in one's cognitive ability and transferability of existing skills (Condon and Holleque 2013; Gecas 1989). It also suggests that where negative views of politics do develop, for HE individuals it will be more in line with a dissatisfied-disaffection than is likely for non-HE young people. As with external efficacy, FE students are again not more positive than those young people who have pursued no post-compulsory education. Despite their additional years benefitting from learning and teaching and their current location within an educational institution, they judge their own political skills as inferior to their peers. Similarly, they view politics as something they struggle to follow and engage with. Either not all forms of education confer political skills (Jennings and Stoker 2008: 3) or there are at least perceptions among young people that this is the case.

5.6. The disaffection effect

Analysis conducted above using the BPS and CITS present young people as disaffected. They may not be more disaffected than older individuals and the type of disaffection

experienced within the youth electorate may vary, depending on different levels of education and resultant assessments of efficacy (internal and external) and responsiveness. Crucially, however, the explanatory framework I envisage presents these attitudes of dissatisfaction and alienation as being important predictors of turnout and ones which vary across age and education groups in their effects. It addresses the presence *and* position of disaffection within an individual's overarching political character. In support of this, Blais and Rubenson find across eight Western polities evidence of efficacy in the baby-boomer generation being lower than in a pre-boomer group, for example. This is suggestive of changing attitudes from generation to generation. Significantly, for arguments here, they note that had these views affected the voting behaviour of baby-boomers and been internalised to become a key feature of their political character, turnout decline should have been witnessed as early as the 1970s when this generation entered the electorate. Falling turnout has actually occurred much later, however, from the 1990s onwards. This implies only among more recent generations have participation attitudes associated with efficacy become significant in affecting turnout decisions when considered alongside other attitudes (2013: 113). The remainder of this chapter thus focuses on testing *H1* and the claim that in youth, non-voting behaviour is positively associated with disaffection. It studies disaffection's impact on turnout in Britain to start establishing the applicability of a non-voting disaffected citizenry framework to an understanding of youth political participation.

Within the original framework the varied impact of disaffection is partly predicted as a reaction to the assumed greater prevalence of disaffection among young people. A spill-over effect was expected to operate through the social network reinforcement of these attitudes, their greater frequency making them more influential. The preceding analysis does not provide strong evidence to support this proposed mechanism, however. Young people could nevertheless still be expected to be more affected by disaffection due to their being young, without electoral habits, and subject to fewer pro-voting influences. Simultaneously, a weakening of traditional agents of political socialisation, such as the family, leaves today's young people freer than in previous generations to make individual participation choices (Flanagan et al 2012). Furthermore, there is the greater societal and educational emphasis today placed on exercising individual choice, something which is promoted through an increasingly emancipatory form of teaching and learning (Carr 1995: 76) alongside citizenship education, introduced in part in an effort to support young people to engage in politics (Kisby and Sloam 2012; Whiteley 2014; Keating et al

2010). With youth electorates of the 2000s experiencing their formative political years during a period in which basic needs have been increasingly met, they have furthermore enjoyed the security to afford self-actualising values more attention when they emerge (Maslow 1943: 383; Inglehart 1977, 1990, 2008). Finally, as aggregate education has risen, the gap between HE and non-HE individuals has grown to mean there is potential for disaffection to exert a more powerful force on behaviours – particularly among more marginalised non-HE individuals. All these factors should therefore generate greater appetite among young people than other groups to focus on disaffection when deciding how to act, prioritising their level of political criticism above any social obligation concerns or habitual behaviours (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Dalton 2006: 92-5).

5.6.1. Modelling disaffection and turnout

To test this assertion, I have first conducted binary logistic regression with the BPS sample, centred on self-reported turnout at the 2010 UK general election. The results of are presented in Table 5.4.⁴⁰ This considers how disaffection variables in their own right and the disaffection deficit measures affect turnout decisions. Also, how these might alter the impact of age and education, and whether the effects differ across age and aggregate educational groups. I use the same disaffection scales developed above, demographic controls for gender and ethnicity alongside the original age and education variables, as well as potential mechanisms related to party support and social network attitudes to voting (see page 145). This is an extension of the analysis conducted in Tables 5.1. and 5.2, and studies how the factors affecting disaffection attitudes now work alongside them to influence turnout. It provides an opportunity, therefore, and to test first whether actual turnout, and thus the patterns we see in voting behaviour today, can be understood as being connected to an emerging disaffected citizenry.

⁴⁰ For this and all other logistic regression models, analysis of residuals has been conducted using tests for outliers – with Cook's Distance scores consistently lower than one and Leverage statistics consistently close to zero – as well as classification plots. The classification plots vary in presentation across the models, and so while significant other factors also likely to contribute to turnout prediction, as would be anticipated in any understanding of human behaviour. The findings nevertheless remain interesting and important.

Table 5.4: Binary logistic regression, correlates of turnout, 2010 General Election – testing disaffection and deficits

	I			II			III			IV		
	B (s.e)	Exp(B)		B (s.e)	Exp(B)		B (s.e)	Exp(B)		B (s.e)	Exp(B)	
Gender (comparison = male)	-.091 (.190)	.913		-.200 (.185)	.819		-.107 (.193)	.899		-.215 (.186)	.806	
Ethnicity (comparison = White British)	-1.456 (.264)***	.233		-1.393 (.260)***	.248		-1.474 (.270)***	.229		-1.428 (.265)***	.240	
HE experience (comparison = HE)	-.195 (.195)	.923		-.256 (.190)	.774		-.213 (.197)	.808		-.266 (.191)	.767	
Age	.022 (.006)***	1.023		.022 (.006)***	1.022		-.021 (.041)	.979		.013 (.011)	1.013	
Party supporter (high = very strong)	2.054 (.305)***	7.802		2.274 (.275)***	9.716		2.038 (.308)***	7.676		2.295 (.298)***	9.925	
Friends and family think voting is a waste of time (high = strongly disagree)	1.161 (.313)***	3.193		1.210 (.298)***	3.352		1.150 (.317)***	3.158		1.182 (.299)***	3.260	
Internal efficacy scale	.769 (.518)	2.159					2.254 (1.606)***	70.835				
External efficacy scale	1.896 (.608)***	6.662					1.608 (1.898)	4.995				
Ideals scale	-1.314 (.920)	.269					-8.958 (3.211)***	.000				
Responsiveness scale	-.183 (.645)	.833					1.409 (2.119)	4.093				
Internal efficacy scale*Age							-.071 (.031)**	.931				
External efficacy scale*Age							.006 (.038)	1.006				
Ideals scale*Age							.157 (.063)**	1.170				
Responsiveness scale*Age							-.034 (.040)	.965				
Efficacy deficit scale				.314 (.418)	.730					1.851 (1.273)	6.367	
Responsiveness deficit scale				-.311 (.527)	.733					-4.058 (1.732)**	.017	
Efficacy deficit scale*Age										-.045 (.025)*	.956	
Responsiveness deficit scale*Age										.077 (.034)**	1.080	
Constant	-1.288 (.690)*			-.863 (.386)**			.879 (2.029)			-.431 (.586)		
-2LL	766.710			780.476			756.695			773.945		
Model significance	147.029***			133.263***			157.044***			139.794***		
Hosmer Lemeshow	15.407*			12.918			4.094			5.878		
Nagelkerke R ²	.249			.227			.264			.237		
% correctly classified	76.3			76.0			77.0			76.0		
N	820			820			820			820		

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout, ***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.1

Reaffirming a wide range of studies (see meta-analysis, Smets and van Ham 2013, and Chapter 1) and my descriptive analysis in Chapter 4, both age and education are positively associated with increased turnout potential when considering demographic and mechanism controls only, with no disaffection variables (not presented). In this simple model, individuals without HE experience are 34.4 per cent less likely to have voted in 2010 while turnout also increases with age, with (predominantly linear) odds ratio of 1.022.⁴¹ Being a party supporter and being located in pro-voting social networks are also both positive and significant determinants, giving us reason to believe these may temper the impact of disaffection where exists, as my theoretical model proposes.

In models *I* and *II*, I test the significance of the disaffection variables when added to the regression. In this format, there are relatively limited effects. An external efficacy scale is significant. Individuals believing the political system is open to their influence – with maximum scores on all scale component items – are 6.7 times more likely to have voted than if scoring zero. It can be important to believe you are able to influence politics and that there are benefits to be had from being active in order to feel compelled to vote. Such a finding could further reflect a phenomenon where when the act of voting itself is thought to matter, it can positively impact upon the motivation to work. Conversely, if individuals feel powerless within politics – and we assume more disaffected in an absolute sense – they are less likely to vote. The remaining disaffection scales, and the deficits tested in the alternative model *II*, are not significant, however, suggesting that for the electorate as a whole, these attitudes do not have a consistent effect.

Interestingly, however, HE experience and the advantage associated with being a university student or graduate is no longer found. Differences between HE and non-HE may therefore be in part explained by varying assessments of external efficacy across the two groups. Age nevertheless remains important, and young people will still be found to vote less than their older counterparts irrespective of their disaffection, partisanship, and closeness to pro-voting friends and family.

⁴¹ Models in Table 5.4 have been conducted using both a scale-level age variable (presented) and ordinal age group variable. No consistently significant differences emerge between specific age groups although in models (*I*) and (*II*) both 18-24 year olds and 25-34 year olds are significantly less likely to vote than 75+ year olds, suggesting a particularly notable gap between the very youngest and very oldest electors.

One of the leading issues of interest within *H1*, however, is the notion of variable disaffection effects across age groups and a contention that these are more powerful for young people than for older groups. For this reason, I introduce interaction effects between disaffection attitudes and age (*III* and *IV*). In both cases, there are suggestions of improved model fit (from models *I* and *II*) with increased Nagelkerke R^2 scores and smaller log-likelihood ratio statistics.

The inclusion of product-term interactions in logistic regression must be approached with more caution than in linear regression models. This is because compression effects and the non-linear distribution, necessarily constrained between zero and one, mean there is already an in-built interactive effect (Huang and Shields 2000: 81; Berry et al 2010). Individuals towards the extremes of the probability curve – for example, the very likely to vote, or the very unlikely – will find a greater effect size is needed in order to experience a significant change in their voting likelihood. In contrast, those towards the centre, where the curve is at its steepest, will be much more sensitive. For Wolfinger and Rosenstone, it is among individuals with a vote likelihood of 40 to 60 per cent where a predictor variable's impact will be greatest (1980: 11). Thus, when thinking about age it must be recognised that young people, at 44 per cent, may be particularly susceptible.

However, while polling suggests that in 2010 electors aged 35+ years had an over 60 per cent chance of voting, turnout overall was still only 65 per cent and no age group could arguably be viewed as being at the limits.⁴² There would still be potential for not insignificant changes in voting likelihood. Equally, as Berry et al state, despite their reservations on the necessity of product-terms such techniques remain a valuable tool where this is 'an explicit theory about the effects of variables' (2010: 261; see Nagler 1991). In this instance, my proposed model makes a clear case for expecting the impact specifically of disaffection attitudes to be variable across age groups (*H1*). Hence, I choose to include these interactions as distinct product-term variables. Evidently the magnitude of effects is important for assessing variables' explanatory contribution within the context of compression. Moreover, within a logistic regression model the inclusion of interactions impacts on the interpretation of individual predictors. I therefore use graphical presentations to aid the analysis in which 'the two variables of

⁴² 18-24 = 44%, 25-34 = 55%, 35-44 = 66%, 45-54 = 69%, 55-64 = 73%, and 65+ = 76% (Ipsos-MORI 2010).

central concern [...] are permitted to vary over their empirical ranges, whereas the other independent variables are fixed at their most typical values' (Huang and Shields 2000: 83).

Almost all age groups see propensity to vote increase as they become more demanding in their democratic ideals; as their score on the scale rises, so too does their turnout probability (*III*). This is true of all groups except for young people. For those aged 18-24, their likelihood of voting actually falls and for 25-34 year olds there is very little impact. This suggests that while members of older groups are likely to link voting to their own views on the importance of seemingly democratic practices – such as parties representing people's views and voters having a say – and turn out when they value these ideals. This effect is strongest for the very oldest groups. In contrast, it appears young people are not as strongly motivated to vote even when they possess high ideals for politics' operation, suggesting they require something more to mobilise them.

In the case of internal efficacy, where significantly different effects are seen across groups, all but 75+ individuals see their likelihood of voting increase as their own political confidence rises. The impact of this is greatest among 18-24 year olds for whom feeling personally efficacious and able to engage in politics fully and in an informed way appears particularly influential.

Drawing on this variation in effects, and responding to thoughts that what matters even more is a democratic deficit and a tension between expectations and reality (Norris 1999, 2011; see also Seyd 2016), I have also studied the interactions between age and the two deficit scales. Both appear to have a bearing on individual turnout decisions. Simultaneously, both the impact of education and of age become negligible suggesting the variation between these different groups can, to some extent, be explained by the views of and approaches to politics they hold and/or develop in relation to these characteristics. They can be distinguished from each other in their behaviours on the basis of their attitudes with disaffection playing the moderating role *H1* proposes. Equally, disaffection being included here using the two deficit scales rather than the four separate scale variables. Given it suggests some detail may be lost by doing so, however, there is clear rationale for continuing to reference the four original component scales in any interpretation. They provide information on the elements within the disaffection deficit scores which have most bearing on turnout. By plotting the interaction terms from

model *V* (Figures 5.7 and 5.8), the divergent strength and direction of the impact of the relative disaffection indicators can be better seen.

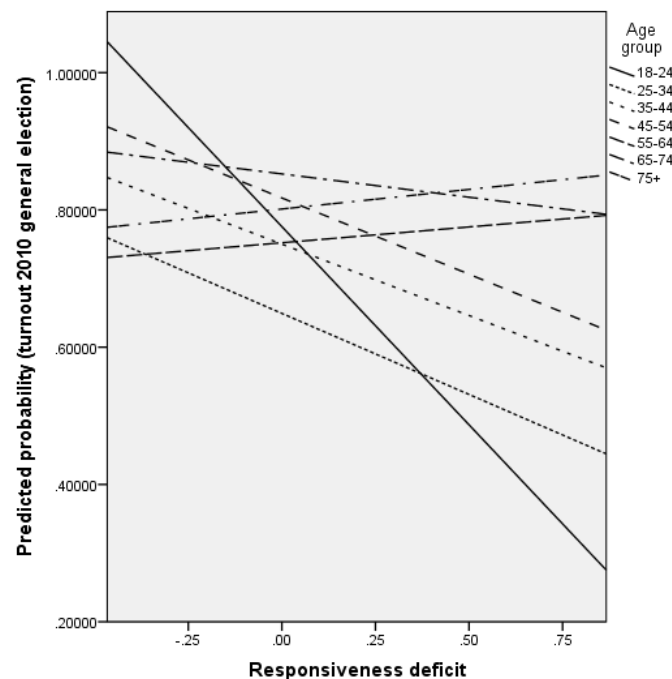
5.6.2. The disaffection effect across age groups

On political responsiveness (Figure 5.8), the very youngest electors appear most affected by a deficit. The same rules for interpreting each deficit presented above apply again here; on the X axis, a deficit score close to one indicates the possession of high democratic ideals but little belief that these are currently being met (dissatisfaction). A score of zero implies levels on each scale are equal – individuals' ideals match the perceived reality – while negative scores suggest perceptions of responsiveness are more optimistic than the democratic ideals individuals hold. An individual may have very few demands on how governments act and so be happy for less conventionally democratic practices to exist, such as non-elected experts playing a leading role above that of elected representatives. Simultaneously, they could feel confident that the system is trustworthy and its outputs beneficial to them. It is found here that an 18-24-year-old possesses a very high turnout likelihood – one much greater than any other age group – when they report being very satisfied with the responsiveness of politics and yet have low aspirations. This is not particularly surprising in itself since it implies that when they expect little of politics but encounter an apparently fair and accountable political world, they feel more inclined to turn out and support the current system of governance. In agreement with my framework's predictions, as the deficit becomes positive and larger, an indication of young people's democratic ideals becoming more demanding and their perceptions more negative, their turnout potential falls considerably.

In contrast, perceptions of how trustworthy, representative, and/or responsive political actors and institutions are, are not clear determinants of turnout in the BPS sample. This is to some extent surprising since the responsiveness scale is arguably more closely connected to electoral politics, the component questions requiring respondents to assess the performances of those actors who are in positions of power as a result of elections. If politicians are not trusted, for example, it does not appear unreasonable to believe the processes by which politicians are elected become unattractive and prompt electors to abstain. It also alludes loosely to issues of valence. While not a pure test – valence being based on competence assessments for issues of importance and the rewarding or punishing governments and parties rather than a more generalised perceived

responsiveness concept (Clarke et al 2004) – there are similarities. Responsiveness ultimately relates to judgements on the past actions of political actors and institutions and predictions of future performance and behaviour. A valence voting approach claims poor performing governments are punished at the polls. Adapting this to apply to turnout and responsiveness, if the political establishment is viewed as unresponsiveness, low turnout could be anticipated (Miles 2015). Instead, the results suggest responsiveness perceptions are not significant; for the sample as a whole, there is no clear negative relationship between this type of disaffection and turnout, actually undermining expectations; a low score, indicative of high disaffection, does not generate significantly lower turnout. When considering disaffection in this absolute sense, perceived or felt influence thus appears a more important determinant than valence-style, performance-based considerations.

Figure 5.8: Mean predicted probability for 2010 General Election turnout by responsiveness deficit and age



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout; n = 101 (18-24), 184 (25-34), 155 (35-44), 190 (45-54), 321 (55-64), 172 (65-74), and 42 (75+) (n calculated on age group and responsiveness deficit)

The predicted probability line of young people on the graph starts to cross those of much older groups fairly close to a point at which each group has a deficit score of zero or just less than this. This points towards variation in turnout potential across age groups being

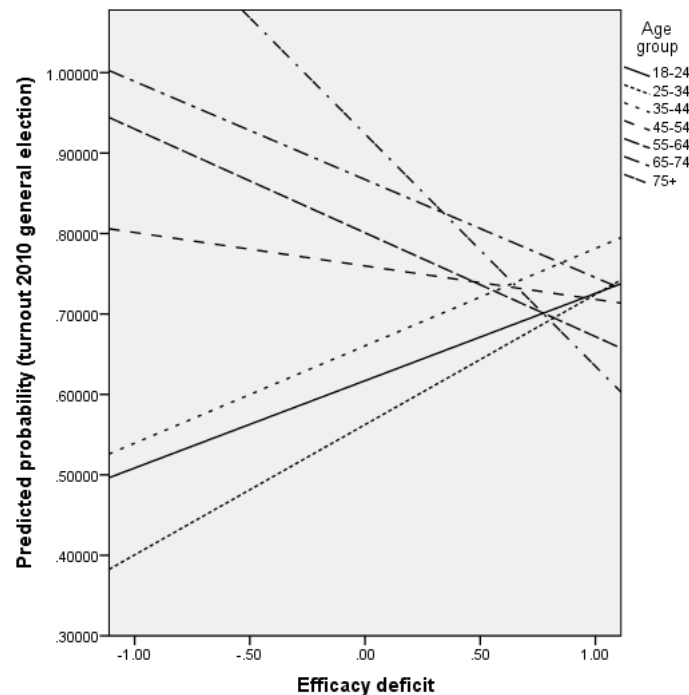
closely tied to the notion of a deficit; as soon as it presents as positive, indicative of a tension between ideals and experiences, young people start to become less likely to vote than other groups, irrespective of the actual deficit size. The deficit only needs to be approximately .3 before they are the least likely and just .5 before their turnout probability falls below 50 per cent. There is support for a view that where a disaffected citizenry exists among young people, especially with the characteristics of a responsiveness dissatisfaction, the probability of voting is lowered. Observations earlier that ideals for and perceptions of representative democracy in the BPS sample are relatively consistent across educational groups in the youth population, this can be thought to relate to both HE and non-HE alike. Similar patterns are found for 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 year olds, and even 65-74 year olds, although to a much weaker extent, implying their turnout potential is less affected by these considerations even though they play a turnout-depressing role. In the case of the latter group – 65-74 year olds – when their deficit is close to one, they still retain one of the highest probabilities of voting.

Conversely, older voters aged 55-64 years and 75+ years, display tendencies where their likelihood of voting rises as their ideals increase and yet faith in these being delivered is low. For members of these older groups their participation in elections appears more dependent on holding a commitment to the principles of representative democracy rather than any assessments of whether or not these are being met. It is possible this reflects ideas about civic duty and a belief in voting itself being a key responsibility for supporters of democracy. This would support Dalton's leading hypothesis surrounding understandings of democracy and citizenship and how these have changed over generations from duty-based to engaged preferences (2008a). It would also fit with evidence from Blais and Rubenson of generational value change and the weakening position of civic duty in the electoral decision-making of more recent generations (2013). Moreover, it can again indicate a less valence-based approach to electoral participation, older individuals appearing more content to disregard negative views of the current government and politicians if and where they themselves value principles associated with representative democracy. Ideas of valence voting have, for example, only more recently appeared to come to the fore in voting behaviour studies, such an approach not being as evident in the past as it is thought to be now (Clarke et al 2004, 2011).

In Western polities, democracy as an idea tends to be supported as an ideal by the vast majority of individuals (Norris 2011: 91-6) and yet preferences within this can vary. The

results here suggest that while younger generations are much more likely to vote where they believe politicians and parties are acting democratically, older generations are perhaps more focused on electors acting democratically, that is to say voting. To extend *H1*, the youth electorate is consequently not only more affected by responsiveness concerns but also differently affected. Even if these dissatisfied electors are not more apparent in numerical terms among young people, non-voting dissatisfied electors seem to be.

Figure 5.9: Mean predicted probability for 2010 General Election turnout by efficacy deficit and age



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout; $n = 102$ (18-24), 173 (25-34), 135 (35-44), 182 (45-54), 295 (55-64), 147 (65-74), and 40 (75+) (n calculated on age group and efficacy deficit)

The efficacy deficit also demonstrates variation across age groups (Figure 5.9). A score close to one suggests the individual possesses very high internal efficacy but low external efficacy, while any negative score suggests their external efficacy ranks higher than their internal efficacy. A score of zero indicates equal feelings on the two scales. We can see the very youngest electors, and significantly also those aged 25-34 and 35-44 years, are most likely to vote when internal efficacy is high and external efficacy low (sample sizes over 100). The anticipated *negative* disaffection deficit effect is not witnessed. It should be argued instead that for young people to vote, it is more important that they feel

confident in their ability to participate as opposed to needing to believe the system is open to their influence. Within the context of the wider electorate, dissatisfaction on efficacy is thus not a turnout-depressing force in youth as seen for responsiveness. The results on this measure instead favour assumptions surrounding a proposed self-fulfilling and relative education effect where low internal efficacy is thought to lower turnout potential. Nevertheless, a low internal efficacy score can, as posited above, be in itself be indicative of a negative assessment of politics in that it develops from a perception of politics being something one needs to be qualified for. It is not necessarily viewed as open to everyone.

Once more, individuals in older age groups, starting from 45 years, demonstrate a reverse relationship. Their turnout likelihood falls, albeit with a weaker effect size, as the deficit grows. This suggests that for them to vote the system has to feel open to influence. Personal capacity for action is less critical; as long as they feel they can have a say, they will participate.

It might again be suggested that this distinction between older and younger generations is suggestive of changing attitudes towards elections. Older groups are fairly likely to vote even if they are not wholly confident in their own capacity to do so, placing their faith in politics as being something they can influence even with a lack of political skill or understanding. Elections could be valued as more worthwhile and important for these individuals with voting viewed as an act which can make a difference. It also appears to be considered more in the language of responsibility – a sense of duty – which permeates irrespective of personal circumstances or qualification. Moreover, for members of older generations, entering the electorate during a period of global civil rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s may have reinforced a feeling that all people have a right to participate, again regardless of potential barriers such as ability. Younger generations are in contrast only more likely to vote than older generations when they believe they are qualified to do so. The implication is that they may view participation as something requiring engagement with issues, so demanding a certain level of political skill and confidence. Thus there appear to be generational differences in how participation is approached and the ways in which different attitudes variously impact on eventual behaviours.

Unlike in Figure 5.8, however, we can see that where there is a large efficacy deficit – a score of one – the age groups are less widely dispersed in their turnout probability. The impact of a ‘maximum’ deficit is therefore more consistent across age groups. It also indicates that while younger people see turnout potential increase as the deficit rises, they do not actually become more likely to vote than other older age groups until their deficit score is not only positive but high at approximately .75. For many young people, where a frustration between expectations and perceived reality exists they can still demonstrate lower turnout rates than expected in other groups. A negative tension effect is therefore not especially noteworthy in actually depressing older groups’ turnout. It is only when young people’s internal efficacy is considerably higher that it appears to outweigh any effects associated with low external efficacy and make them the most electorally participative. Nevertheless, from the graph it remains evident that for a young person, as soon as internal efficacy outweighs external efficacy (a positive score) their turnout potential moves in favour of voting, the probability at this point reaching approximately 50 per cent.

Interestingly, inclusion of interaction terms between education and the disaffection deficits – both when applied as the only tested interactions and alongside the age-based interactions of model *IV* – reveals insignificant relationships, while age-disaffection interaction effects remain in evidence.⁴³ This implies the variation in disaffection effects is less the result of individual education than of age and generational cohort. Potential electors respond differently to disaffection in their voting decisions according to their own life-cycle circumstances and as I have proposed, their corresponding cohort-specific environmental education experiences (distinct in their level and nature). Whether they are HE or non-HE educated within this, does not immediately appear to vary the effects, although evidently with education itself remaining significant as a determinant in the deficit regressions (*IV*) the likelihood of voting will still differ between these groups. Applying this to the youth participation puzzle, for example, one could argue that while all young people are affected similarly by disaffection, those with HE can experience additional pro-voting influences which lead them to participate more. This helps to understand young people’s lower turnout but also the variation in rates within this. Moreover, as observed previously in determinants of disaffection, the base levels upon

⁴³ Interaction effects with HE status proved insignificant across all the tested models irrespective of how disaffection was operationalised and included.

which a deficit is calculated and takes effect can vary which might further impact on the strength and direction of any deficit effect.

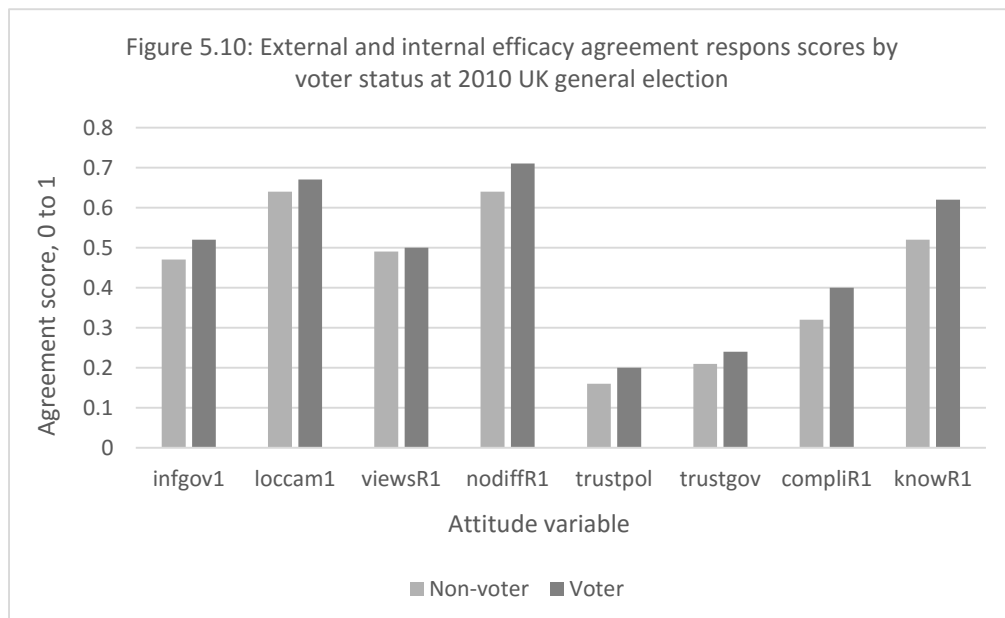
The findings here support the conclusion of Hooghe and Marien that it is internal efficacy and responsiveness concerns in tandem which are most important for understanding political participation (2013). To demonstrate the effects, by way of comparison, assuming an individual is female and White British, a 21-year-old with HE experience and reporting average partisanship, network, and deficit scores for 18-24 year olds, has a probability of having voted of 62.6 per cent in model IV. A similar individual without HE would vote at a rate of just 56.2 per cent. As I suggest above and intend to test, this could relate to wider factors associated with educational background. Equally, as has been deduced from the regressions of Table 5.4 (and from those OLS regressions earlier in the chapter), it could also relate to higher internal efficacy. While the efficacy deficit is in fact marginally greater among an HE constituency this stems from their having on average much more confidence in their own political ability than non-HE respondents rather than the possession of considerably lower external efficacy. These absolute scores from the four component scales bring this additional nuance to the framework and help in identifying and distinguishing between elector types. Following the same process for older individuals, a 51-year-old with HE experience and deficit scores which meet the average for 45-54 year olds had a voting probability of 77.0 per cent. The turnout likelihood of a 51-year-old with no HE experience remains higher than that of an educated 21-year-old, at 71.9 per cent. HE does provide an advantage within and across age groups and yet a puzzle of student/young graduate participation still persists. This indicates that where there is a high level of disaffection, young people can be particularly susceptible to its influence.

5.6.3. The disaffection effect in youth: educational variation

The above analysis finds that young people in Britain today are less likely to vote and are more heavily impacted upon by disaffection when making this decision than other, older electors. Indications are that young people can be deemed a non-voting disaffected citizenry. Once again, I now extend this analysis using the CITS to test how particular educational experiences and combinations or types of disaffection attitudes come to shape different young people's turnout decisions. To what extent are young non-voters more likely to be characterised by disaffection than young voters? Are all young people

disaffected, hinting at other mechanisms operating behind mobilised voters, or are there further disaffection effects in youth?

Among young people, an initial test of turnout in 2010 finds significant effects appearing to operate across different types of educational status. University graduates are the most likely young people to have voted in 2010 at 60.9 per cent. Postgraduate (56.8) and undergraduate (47.7) students follow, while young people with no post-compulsory educational experience voted at 37.1 per cent. Interestingly, despite possessing additional post-compulsory education, further education (FE) students reported voting at just 30.4 per cent, $\chi^2 (4, n=1,712) = 71.784, p<.001$ (Cramer's $V = .205, p<.001$). Often FE is seen as a route into HE – for instance, FE colleges providing opportunities for foundational degrees or the re-taking of school-level qualifications – and can be entered into at a younger age. However, the age bias this could create does not appear to be responsible for their much lower turnout probability. Even among the older members of the sample (aged 22 to 24 years), FE students voted at a rate of only 31.4 per cent compared to the 47.6 per cent average for this age group, $\chi^2 (4, n=966) = 48.252, p<.001$. While some distance from HE turnout rates might be expected – both from traditional civic education theories and even a sorting model approach – their voting less than the non-FE/HE group is surprising for conventional assumptions of education's linear and positive effects.



Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), n ranges from 1410 to 1649 (for full variable descriptions, refer to Table 5.3)

In order to support the disaffected citizenry framework, however, it is important to track the impact of disaffection, where it exists, on actual electoral participation and variation in attitudes across non-voting and voting young people. Displayed in Figure 5.10, voters tend to be more positive in their assessments than the non-voting youth.⁴⁴

Comparing across the eight variables, significant differences are found between voters and non-voters. I have recoded each variable's responses between zero and one, and to make these comparable utilised reverse coding for negative statements. Thus in the four statements which include the identifier 'R1' as a suffix to their variable name, a score closer to one is indicative of strong disagreement which in turn reflects a more positive assessment. On every one of these scales, young people who voted in 2010 are more positive than those who chose not to vote. Independent sample T-tests imply these differences, even if appearing small, are significant at a level of $p < .05$ except for *viewsR1* ($p = .73$). On all variables, non-voting young people score close to or lower than .5 suggesting they are also marginally more negative than positive in their overall perceptions of politics and of their position as political participants. Already there are implications that non-voting young people are to some extent characterised by disaffection and significantly more so than those who choose to vote. For my proposed framework, the mobilised voters appear encouraged to vote as a result, in part, of greater satisfaction in the political world and their potential within it. At this level, it appears not only mobilisation that sets them apart but a genuinely more optimistic approach.

I incorporate these variables into a binary logistic regression model to assess their impact on turnout at the 2010 general election alongside other controls (Table 5.5).⁴⁵ These demographic characteristics are designed to replicate where possible those included in the wider electorate BPS regressions. An additional social class indicator, as represented by occupational status of respondents' parents, is also now included. Previously, the absence of parental socio-economic indicators in the BPS restricted social class controls since without this judging the social class of a young person still in education is much harder. It can generate bias, a student, for example, typically having no personal income or full-time employment comparable to that of someone older. Any

⁴⁴ Responses re-coded between zero (strongly disagree/not at all trusting) and one (strongly agree/completely trusting). For variable labels see Table 5.3.

⁴⁵ For variable labels see Table 5.3.

resultant classification might be unrepresentative of actual class and background. To create the variable used here, parents' occupations have been allocated to four groups based on the Office for National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (ONS 2012): higher managerial and professional, intermediate, routine manual, and never worked or long-term unemployed. I have classified respondents by either their mother or father's occupational group, whichever is highest. Clearly, it is unknown whether the respondent grew up in the same household as the higher-rated parent – and so is likely to have adopted any associated values and lifestyle – but this attempts at providing some insight into social background which has as yet been unavailable. This is important where alternative arguments claim educational status and experience are often merely proxies for socio-economic status, individuals from particular social backgrounds being more likely to pursue particular educational tracks (Persson 2012).

Following Highton and Wolfinger's example (2001), I have also created a three-category age group variable (calculated from year and month of birth and reflecting age at the time of the 2010 General Election): 18-19 years, 20-21 years, and 22-24 years. These correspond to what I consider to be important life-cycle and educational stages, 18-19 years being the point at which most individuals in Britain would enter university or college if pursuing these routes and 22-24 years the time in which individuals are leaving HE or FE to enter employment. They therefore act as proxies for these stages as well as a standard biological age variable. From the regressions it becomes clear that age continues to exert a significant influence on turnout potential even within the narrow age range of the sample. The oldest respondents are more likely to have voted, demonstrating an advantage associated with life (and potentially, political) experience.

The results for disaffection indicate that of the attitudinal variables chosen for inclusion, only two have a consistently significant impact on turnout once demographic characteristics are controlled for; whether the individual believes they can influence government and their relative judgement of their own political knowledge compared against that of their peers (see model 1). In both instances, as individuals become more positive, their likelihood of voting rises. Individuals with maximum perceived influence are 1.9 times more likely to have voted than those believing they have no influence in politics while for an individual who completely disagrees that their knowledge is less than their peers, turnout is 2.6 times more likely.

Table 5.5: Binary logistic regression: youth turnout at the 2010 General Election

	<i>I</i>		<i>II</i>	
	B (s.e)	Exp(B)	B (s.e)	Exp(B)
Age (base = 22-24 years)				
18-19 years	-.226 (.181)	.798	-.273 (.195)	.761
20-21 years	-.348 (.151)**	.706	-.391 (.165)**	.677
Gender (base = male)	-.269 (.144)*	.764	-.279 (.156)*	.757
Ethnicity (base = White British)	-.984 (.169)***	.374	-1.016 (.184)***	.362
Parent SES (base = higher managerial)				
Never worked/LT unemployed	.483 (.320)	1.621	.538 (.374)	1.713
Routine and manual	-.351 (.164)**	.704	-.369 (.178)**	.691
Intermediate	-.057 (.161)	.944	.037 (.176)	1.037
Educational status (base = no HE/FE)				
FE	-.344 (.218)	.709	-.393 (.231)*	.686
HE (UG)	.325 (.173)*	1.384	.400 (.179)**	1.377
HE (PG)	.679 (.224)***	1.973	.691 (.230)***	1.749
HE (Graduate)	.913 (.201)***	2.491	1.160 (.208)***	3.771
Internal efficacy				
complir1 (high = strongly disagree)	.425 (.273)	1.529	.106 (.300)	1.112
knowR1 (high = strongly disagree)	.944 (.280)***	2.529	.478 (.332)	1.612
External efficacy				
infgov1 (high = strongly agree)	.630 (.264)**	1.878	.260 (.289)	1.297
loccam1 (high = strongly agree)	.194 (.316)	1.214	.202 (.344)	1.224
viewsR1 (high = strongly disagree)	-.334 (.306)	.716	-.289 (.331)	.749
Responsiveness				
nodiffR1 (high = strongly disagree)	.490 (.258)*	1.633	.182 (.289)	1.200
trustpol (high = completely)	.569 (.405)	1.767	.299 (.436)	1.348
trustgov (high = completely)	.157 (.361)	1.170	-.048 (.391)	.953
Partisan (base = party supporter)			-1.134 (.146)***	.322
Discuss politics with other people (high = strongly agree)			.739 (.287)**	2.094
Friends are not interested in politics (high = strongly disagree)			.160 (.301)	1.173
Constant	-1.201 (.343)***		-.146 (.400)	
-2LL	1444.586		1247.228	
Model significance	151.961***		220.529***	
Hosmer-Lemeshow	23.406**		6.103***	
Nagelkerke R²	.165		.251	
% correctly classified	64.1		69.3	
N	1187		1094	

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), ***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.1

The remaining variables do not appear to differentiate between voters and non-voters. Hence, if we are to characterise a non-voting disaffected citizenry it should be defined principally by low levels of perceived influence on national government and perceptions of relative ability. In contrast, responsiveness and trust indicators, low for all young people (albeit marginally higher among voters), do not generate further variation within this youngest electoral generation. Therefore, we might characterise all young people as

demonstrating disaffection and, as the BPS analysis suggests, this being particularly influential on turnout when it occurs within a responsiveness deficit. Among young people themselves, however, there are likely further mechanisms shaping an eventual turnout decision. Disaffection is only one part of the calculation.

In model *II*, I therefore extend the analysis to explore alternative mechanisms which may exacerbate the differences between young people. Drawing on earlier discussions of the literature and the BPS logistic regression, I include alongside the demographic variables and disaffection attitudes indicators for social network interactions and party identification. These are designed to test assumptions that some young people will be more mobilised than others to participate, particularly due party mobilisation at election times. Their disaffection reflects not only general perceptions and experiences but their views on the political offers being made to them during a campaign. This also starts to examine some of the propositions associated with *H5*, in which pro-voting non-voters are deterred from voting according to issue-based voting principles. They are unable to identify with a party to vote for and so even if they want to vote, they abstain on polling day. Social networks and political interest, in contrast, would be assumed to unite both groups – or offer less significant points of difference. They would be considered responsible for the shared commitment to voting, the apparent first stage in the process of becoming a voter.

By way of operationalisation, a party supporter dummy variable is used to capture engagement with party politics (1=party supporter). Responses here are recorded on a five-point scale, coded between zero and one, from no interest at all in politics to a great deal of interest. To represent the level of politicisation within a young person's social networks I employ Likert-scale responses on two statements: (1) 'I often discuss politics with other people', (2) 'My friends are not interested in politics'. Both use five-point scales of agreement – similarly re-coded between zero and one – with reverse coding used on the second statement. A high score reflects a high level of politicisation and a low score, a low level. While these do not strictly measure position and connections in the way typically seen in work on the sorting model – Persson, for example, using individuals' professional connections recorded by the occupations of friends and acquaintances (2014: 728) – the variables are chosen to capture the degree to which the young people believe they interact within politicised circles. This enables me to capture the likelihood of political norms being transferred. A purely social network position

indicator, conversely, relies on greater assumptions about the level of politicisation attached to particular occupations or societal roles. It is also less appropriate for young people who are often yet to have left education and so make such formal connections (see McClurg 2003).

Once these factors are controlled for, no disaffection attitude appears significant. This suggests that while disaffection and associated views can help differentiate between young people and older groups, it is often less variable among young people. It appears disaffection is generally high, but where individuals feel able to identify a party to support and have opportunities to discuss politics with their friends and family, they are more motivated to turn out. I return to and expand upon this in Chapter 7 as part of further mechanism testing.

Educational experience nevertheless continues to exert its own effect in both versions of the model in Table 5.5. Individuals with no HE experience are less likely to vote, with the odds ratios again implying there is an HE versus no-HE divide. In the model with additional variables (*II*) HE individuals are 1.4 to 3.8 times more likely to vote. Interestingly, FE students are still less likely to vote, although this is insignificant in the first model and only at $p < .1$ in model *II*. Thus even among non-voting young people, there is likely to be variation across educational groups which cannot be explained by disaffection alone. It is evidently a feature of their abstention but within this, as my framework allows, there will most likely be other mechanisms at work, potentially still related to educational experiences, which encourage this behaviour. Moreover, and notably, parental occupation is only significant between higher managerial and routine/manual, and inconsistent as a potential determinant when parents are either unemployed or in intermediate professions. This appears to suggest education, rather than pre-existing social background or early socialisation, is still where most differences between young people typically stem from.

5.7. A question of political character?

Young people are not more disaffected than other electors, although disaffection remains present both among HE and non-HE individuals. Additional analysis using the CITS suggests that with reference to internal efficacy this is likely to be a more dissatisfied form of disaffection among the former and alienated for the latter. Young people with HE

experience, within this larger youth sample, demonstrate negative views alongside a relatively higher level of political confidence while those without find themselves feeling less self-assured. Nevertheless, results from the BPS suggest that disaffection, particularly in the form of a responsiveness deficit, can play an important role in discouraging young people from voting. Where a deficit was high and positive, indicative of their high ideals for representative democracy being undermined by negative perceptions of politics and its actors' performances, young people as a whole become far less likely to vote. In contrast, older groups behave in the opposite way. Equally, when plotted, the slopes associated with the interaction terms were much steeper for young people, implying a greater effect size.

The findings bring me to a question of wider political character and approaches to political participation. While it has been established that disaffection is not higher in younger generations, when it is studied alongside turnout in an effort to explain the participation puzzle we see groups responding in different ways to their views and expectations of politics; the ways in which disaffection is internalised and then acted upon appear to be inconsistent across the electorate. It can be suggested that for turnout, young people today are more likely to be negatively impacted upon by responsiveness disaffection where it exists and, we might infer, find it occupying a more prominent place in their participation decision-making processes. In older generations, additional factors instead seem to counter the expected turnout-depressing effects of these attitudes. The composition of their character and approach to politics is markedly different from that seen in younger generations.

While the same negative frustration effect does not occur for efficacy, the impact of low internal efficacy is seen to be much greater among young people. Other, older groups are still mobilised to participate even if their political confidence is low while we can see from plotting their probability of voting against their efficacy deficit scores, their likelihood of voting also remains fairly high even when their external efficacy falls and internal efficacy rises. For young people, low internal efficacy greatly diminishes their likelihood of voting while it appears sometimes able to overcome the barrier posed by low external efficacy. Arguably, however, there remains a sense of disaffection in a low assessment of internal efficacy. It reflects a belief about oneself but inherent in this is an assessment of politics and what is felt to be needed in order to meet participation requirements. If an individual does not feel capable it not only means they view

themselves as ill-equipped but also the political world itself as closed to individuals lacking in the arbitrary skills and knowledge perceived to be important. Non-voting young people even on this measure can therefore still be considered more disaffected.

To return to an idea of political character, the implication is that young people afford their perceptions of themselves as political actors much more weight in their decision-making than older generations. Contrastingly, these latter groups rely more on the performance of the political system and its institutional processes to promote a positive turnout decision. Their internal efficacy can be high but if they lack faith in these processes being open to their influence, their turnout potential falls. Nonetheless, there is considerably less variation in the turnout potential of older groups across the efficacy deficit scale, further suggesting efficacy – internal and external – plays only a minor role in their turnout decision-making. Again, attitudes relating to disaffection have greater bearing in determining younger generations' political participation choices.

As I allude to, even with deviations from the proposed framework, both these findings can be related to the disaffected citizenry framework. All young people, both HE and non-HE, are thought to be subject to responsiveness deficit effect when deciding whether or not to vote. The analysis so far supports this. While they are not the most likely to feel pessimistic, they are the most likely to see it deterring them from turning out where it does exist; when dissatisfaction is high, turnout probability is low. There is consequently support for a frustrated elector-type mechanism being in operation. My framework also predicts an impact on turnout by efficacy concerns. Despite the turnout-depressing role of this measure appearing to relate not to dissatisfaction – this seems largely restricted to responsiveness – there is an internal efficacy element which corresponds to a proposed marginalisation effect. Some young people – we would assume from the literature comprising predominantly non-HE individuals (Condon and Holleque 2013) – respond negatively to electoral opportunities when believing themselves as comparatively lacking in relevant skills or ability. Where this happens, it has a greater impact in youth. An explanatory framework conceptualised around disaffection can subsequently offer particular insight into why, despite their on average higher education level, young people are not voting at the same rate or higher than members of previous generations. Differential turnout does seem in part connected to the comparative strength, composition, and role attitudes play within individuals' political characters and

specifically the varied position disaffection and associated judgements play in determining their political participation choices.

This is supported by the CITS analysis where among young people disaffection often appears less crucial. However, we see internal efficacy playing a role – something which is lower among non-HE youth – indicating that an alienated-disaffection associated with marginalisation effects may again be particularly important in contributing to unequal turnout. With voters and non-voters alike demonstrating disaffection though, other factors are likely to be influencing their behaviours. Disaffection distinguishes between young and old but among young people there are perhaps further mechanisms to consider when building understanding of how both HE and non-HE groups are contributing to the overall lower youth turnout rate.

Establishing whether a relationship between disaffection and turnout exists (*H1*) is clearly important for this research which is ultimately focused on understanding abstention within the youngest, most educated electoral constituency. For this reason, it has enjoyed extensive analysis in this chapter. What the analysis above cannot tell us, however, is more about the mechanisms through which this occurs. Evidently it seems related not to the prevalence of disaffection but its prominence within a political character, certain groups more influenced by these attitudes than others. It is not yet clear, however, why its prominence varies, how this comes about, and how educational experiences might be involved. These questions provide much of the focus for Chapter 7 where I study young people specifically. Before this and to start understanding better the nature of the relationship between disaffection and turnout across groups, however, it is also necessary to investigate whether and how these views exist alongside wider political participation preferences. This contributes to a process of establishing individuals' political character more completely.

Doing so has two key benefits. Firstly, it offers the chance to add explanatory power to the framework on the impact of educational expansion on young people's participation and the processes which connect this and disaffection to their lower turnout. For example, even if similar attitudes are observed across different groups as well as the same eventual electoral behaviour, varied participation preferences might indicate the reasons why these groups behave and think in the way that they do. The theories adapted within my disaffected citizenry all have unique behavioural manifestations beyond

turnout. There are patterns of political participation which are assumed to emerge as a consequence of different educational experiences and resultant attitudes. Hence, observations of these patterns can provide evidence which, as I will explain, can also be used to understand the processes through which different individuals come to abstain.

Secondly, by studying potential for action across a diverse selection of participation activities, more can be learnt about where particular groups are likely to focus their political energies, if at all or any, and what barriers or deterrents exist. Any strategies aimed at boosting turnout rates need to be sensitive to these subtleties and use this kind of insight into the preferences of individuals if they are to successfully (re-)channel the energy of young people into elections. If a young person abstains but is highly active in politics beyond this there appears already a base of political interest and engagement upon which to build. If they have withdrawn from all political activity, the starting point for any strategies will need be tackling political disengagement at a much more fundamental level. These repertoires of participation within which the behaviours and attitudes above can be situated therefore form the focus for the following chapter.

6. Approaches to participation: disaffection and participation repertoires

Young people – an increasingly educated generation – have been found to be disaffected and, crucially, more heavily impacted upon in their turnout decisions by these views. More so than any other electoral group, their approach to political participation can be characterised by the combination of non-voting behaviour and disaffection attitudes. This chapter extends these discussions to a wider appreciation of political participation preferences, establishing the ways in which (and degree to which) voting is positioned within an individual's repertoire of political activity. Doing so establishes the nature of non-voting (or voting) behaviour within an individual's overarching approach to politics – a further development of political character introduced towards the end of Chapter 5. Here, I am interested in how the electorate might be divisible into distinct repertoire types, characterised by unique combinations of behavioural preferences and experiences. For example, to what extent is voting prioritised by some individuals and rejected by others. My second hypothesis *H2*, and its component parts, propose that young people are not only less likely to vote (as supported by the preceding analysis) but also that voting enjoys a far less prominent position in their thinking about political participation. On the one hand, some young people are thought to adopt repertoires in which alternative participation activities are favoured above electoral engagement, while on the other, there are individuals assumed to have no inclination to participate on any level. Contrastingly, older electoral groups are imagined to remain more committed to voting and prioritise this as their preferred method for exerting political influence.

H2: Young people are more likely than other, older electors to report a preference for non-voting repertoires of participation.

H2a: The presence of HE experience, combined with youth, increases the likelihood of an alternative participation repertoire, when it encourages critical views yet high expectations.

H2b: The absence of HE experience, combined with youth, increases the likelihood of an inactive participation repertoire, when it encourages critical views and low expectations.

These hypotheses are important statements because in testing them we can assess how far the political character of young people is truly 'non-voting'. To what extent are the behaviours observed previously reflective of a political participation approach in which the likelihood of voting is even more under threat than turnout rates alone suggest? Is it being superseded? Are individuals disengaging completely? Significantly, they also start to consider in more depth the potential mechanisms through which educational experiences and subsequent disaffection attitudes are shaping the turnout decisions of young people. The leading theories which have been adapted for my disaffected citizenry framework and discussed in Chapter 2 all have behavioural manifestations which extend beyond the act of voting. For example, any evidence suggestive of repertoire replacement will strengthen a case that on-course HE students' abstention is linked to opportunities for alternative participation. While direct causal mechanisms can only be implied, repertoires are therefore indicative of certain processes. These are examined further in Chapter 7 in response to the findings which emerge here. In the scientific realist mould, Chapter 6 forms a predominantly evidence-seeking exercise. Typologies are being devised and used to support (or refute) the foundational claims regarding the mechanisms proposed by my disaffected citizenry framework. By testing the typology, I can also make a judgement on the proportion of the electorate each ideal type is likely to comprise. The contribution each is making to turnout rates overall – and relative role they should subsequently be afforded in the final explanatory framework – can therefore be assessed.

The analysis investigates where and in what ways groups in the British electorate are identifiable by their displaying different participation repertoires. I investigate the number of divergent combinations and how prevalent each is likely to be. Each group's characteristics are studied to observe those which distinguish it from another, including whether particular combinations are especially common among young people (the most educated cohort) and within this, HE or non-HE educated individuals. I also consider how far these can be connected to varying levels and types of political disaffection. To what extent, for example, might a young person reporting large disaffection deficits be likely to adopt a participation repertoire in which they show an interest in voting but do not actually vote, indicative of a shorter-term frustration? Might there exist an individual who favours alternative forms of participation above voting as an activist, and how is this linked to their attitudes towards formal politics? Do low (absolute) levels of disaffection correspond more strongly with a repertoire in which both experience of participation

and a willingness to participate, through any means, is absent? Exploring these questions and the importance of participation preferences therefore contributes to the overarching explanatory framework by developing dimensions of political character. These reflect the ways in which attitudes, expectations, and experiences combine to promote (and determine the type of) non-voting decisions within sectors of the youth population.

As in Chapter 5, I use both British Participation Survey (BPS) and Citizens in Transition Survey (CITS) to test these repertoire hypotheses. First, I study the wider electorate to examine how young people vary from older generations in their participation preferences and the extent to which this more educated and youth group are non-voting in approach. I bring activities together in repertoires demonstrative of both individuals' past experience and their dormant potential for action. I then look in more detail at the variation specifically within the youth electorate, focusing on non-voting young people only, to establish support for the disaffected citizenry typology of frustrated electors, engaged activists, and marginalised citizens as a way of understanding youth abstention.

6.1. Participation repertoires in the British electorate

Earlier, in Figure 2.2, I indicated how different collections of participation potential and participation experience – across electoral and alternative activities – could correspond with the ideal types of my disaffected citizenry. My intention in the following sections is to see how these are reflected in the real world by using information provided by survey respondents. While the samples are quota-based this process nevertheless provides an indication of likely patterns and prevalence.

The full list of activities chosen from the BPS for inclusion are presented in Table 6.1. These all meet the criteria of Brady (1999) in that they require the individual – an ordinary citizen rather than existing political elite – to consider the actions they might take to exert influence in politics. While they clearly vary in the type and level of influence they might have, each carries an implicit intention of affecting political outcomes. This can be through communicating a point of view to other members of the public, attempting to gain a role in frontline politics as an elected representative, supporting others in their attempts to become representatives, demonstrating support for a policy or opinion, or even being a member of a political organisation in order to shape policy agendas. Debate will persist on the exact degree to which they truly represent active

engagement. Attending a meeting might, for example, be considered information-gathering rather than influencing. However, it is taken here to represent an attempt to show support and/or voice concern and, through this, affect policy. In contrast, I have excluded activities such as voluntary work and acting as a magistrate since these are more clearly non-political and would risk conceptual stretching.

Table 6.1: Frequency of self-reported participation potential and experience – percentage of BPS sample who would be willing to become active through electoral and alternative activities and who have done in the past

	Would be willing	Have done
Vote in a local, national or European election (Wvote/Hvote)	70.0	66.8
Take part in industrial action (Windustrial/Hindustrial)	22.6	20.7
Become a member of a political party (Wmemberpp/Hmemberpp)	16.0	13.2
Hold office in a local or national pressure group or organisation (Wpressure/Hpressure)	13.7	4.8
Hold local or national party office (Woffice/Hoffice)	9.1	2.7
Contact a local councillor, members of devolved assembly, MP or MEP about an issue of concern to you (Wcontact/Hcontact)	53.8	37.3
Sign a public petition regarding a national or local issues (Wpetition/Hpetition)	66.2	54.0
Take part in a public demonstration about an issue of concern to you (Wdemo/Hdemo)	29.7	18.0
Donate money to a party or other political organisation (Wdonate/Hdonate)	10.9	9.6
Write a letter to a newspaper editor (Wnewspaper/Hnewspaper)	37.1	23.4
Take an active part in a political campaign about an issue of concern to you (Wcampaign/Hcampaign)	19.8	10.3
Campaign on behalf of a candidate for local, national, UK or European election (Wcanvass/Hcanvass)	9.5	7.3
Be a candidate for an elective post at local, devolved, UK or European levels (Wstand/Hstand)	8.6	3.0
Go to a political meeting (Wmeeting/Hmeeting)	24.2	17.9
Boycott or buy certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons (Wboycott/Hboycott)	43.3	29.0
Make a speech before an organised group (Wspeech/Hspeech)	15.8	13.1

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout; n = 1326

For the electorate-wide analysis I choose to study past experience alongside future willingness. Since some individuals could be highly active on both components while others are possibly high only on the latter, being on 'standby' (Amnå and Ekman 2014) rather than active. As my main dependent variable, a self-report turnout indicator is also included, although to be comparable in question wording here, this simply measures whether the individual has ever voted (it is not specific to 2010). The consideration of both forms of response in the modelling process can make gains in sophistication. For example, if members of the very oldest generations are found to be less willing to participate in politics through alternative activities, is this the result of having a clear preference for electoral participation or do past behaviours suggest during earlier life stages they were happy to be active through other means? The responses provide additional insight into the impact of educational expansion on participation preferences and the likelihood that strong alternative participation preferences are a new phenomenon.

Such a choice evidently has the potential for an age bias in responses if older generations have more years of political experience upon which to draw (Martin 2012a: 215). There is no clear way of attributing any past experience of older respondents to a particular time in their own histories – and thus their age. We can only make approximate inferences regarding generational change. We also know that given the wide range yet often group-specific opportunities available to individuals, and need for issues of concern to emerge, actual participation in a single activity type can often be low even if considered an attractive and effective method by the individual. Once you move beyond the (essentially) universal coverage and timing of elections, rates for other forms of participation are always likely to be lower if each act is studied in isolation. However, this can be built into the interpretation of the results while its inclusion arguably contributes to testing some of my framework's assumptions. For instance, the adapted repertoire replacement hypothesis within the disaffected citizenry model is based on views that despite more years in which to have experienced politics, older generations will not have pursued alternative participation to a significant extent since it is thought only to be now becoming popular. If they are found to have done so, there is evidence to counter this element of the theoretical framework's claims. It is not necessarily a new interest for potential electors, although arguably its position may have changed.

The inclusion of 'willingness to participate', however, is also important and not only to mitigate age bias. My framework is premised principally on arguments relating to attitudes and approaches to participation. Thus, such self-assessment of participation potential can be more insightful for my purposes. I want to know how activities are viewed against electoral participation, not just absolute rates of engagement. The explanations are grounded in how activities compete for primacy in electors' minds to affect their decisions as opposed to a solely zero-sum behavioural trade-off theory. An individual does not need to demonstrate involvement in an activity to be defined as having a preference for it. My frustrated elector, for example, might have the same potential as a mobilised voter for turning out but this lays dormant, not being acted upon to the same extent – assumed here to result from their disaffection and lack of party mobilisation. A marginalised citizen would, contrastingly, demonstrate limited activity *and* a reluctance for future engagement.

6.1.1. A latent class analysis of Britain's political repertoires

While still relatively under-utilised in political participation research (Oser et al 2013: 94), latent class analysis (LCA) is a useful tool in the process of typology development and specification (Hagenaars and Halman 1989). It has potential to uncover clusters of participation repertoires. It is also not unheard of in this field, for example in work by Shryane et al (2006) in their study on heterogeneity in the 2005 British electorate, Oser et al's (2013) study of offline versus online participation, and analysis of students' political participation repertoires by Hustinx et al (2012). There is a precedent while my using this approach contributes to future studies by further demonstrating its suitability for empirical typology development. For the purposes of this analysis one of its major advantages – which can set it apart from factor analysis, used in similar research (see Parry et al 1992) – is its ability to incorporate indicator variables in such a way that they are not uniquely attributed to one type or group. Instead, it permits the study of varied combinations of responses. For example, the potential for voting might be high among more than one section of a sample and yet while in one group this forms part of a wide-ranging repertoire of potential activity, in another it could combine with very little alternative participation potential. Outlined in my methodology, there are further benefits associated with this technique and which set it apart from a traditional k-cluster analysis to make it especially appropriate for my data. As I expand upon below, tools are available for model specification to ensure decisions on how many classes to use is

theoretically and statistically grounded. Relaxed restrictions on indicator variables, such as permitting nominal data, make it more suitable to the data available in the BPS.

It is principally a descriptive statistical process and, on its own, to some extent limited for making strong claims on the nature of causal relationships and testing theory. Nevertheless, its purpose here, through the typology and in its exploratory capacity, is to offer significant understanding into the different political participation approaches likely to be found within the British electorate. Any interpretation involves a degree of subjectivity but it allows us to think about how different combinations of activity preferences might exist and their likely prevalence, from which our theoretical understanding can be further developed. From modelling the resultant classes as dependent variables it can provide more evidence to build a case which supports (or counters) claims about how education effects might be operating across generations. It offers a suggestion as to whether the preferences of those individuals entering the electorate within a more educated cohort differ from those of preceding, less well-educated cohorts, and how, as well as how variation might exist within these cohorts.

My model, from its theoretical underpinnings, assumes there are three notable non-voting types (engaged activist, frustrated elector, and marginalised citizen) and one overarching voter category (mobilised voter). However, while the proposed framework is developed around these four possible eligible elector types, I have also discussed the possibility that mobilised voters, for example, could demonstrate different combinations of attitudes and will not be identical in their alternative participation. Some voters may be wholly positive about politics and it is this which mobilises them. Others may be more disaffected and perhaps mobilised by external forces such as social network pressures. In their preferences, the former may be civic omnivores (Hustinx et al 2012) in orientation while the latter might only ever consider voting. In other cases, similar attitudes could correspond with different participation repertoires, for instance the frustrated elector and engaged activist. Both can be disaffected, both can abstain, but their wider repertoires are different. This variation is important to recognise and I do not seek to dismiss it. The LCA aids the exploration of such patterns. I also later use the resultant classes from the LCA as dependent variables to assess the impact of age, education, and disaffection in encouraging distinct repertoires – information which also provides further description for each.

Nevertheless, it is certainly reasonable to imagine there will be more than four repertoires within the electorate. As stated, one of the principal benefits LCA is its accompanying methods for assessing model fit and determining the most appropriate number of classes. I use a common approach of the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) and the percentage change in the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic (see Magidson and Vermunt 2004: 176–177), as well as analysis of class sizes. These initial statistics and discussion of my model specification are presented in Appendix D, detailing my decision to concentrate on a 5-class model.

6.1.2. Exploring and defining possible repertoires

Latent class profiles for a 5-class model are presented in Table D2 (Appendix D). This displays the variation of each class in its probability of responding positively to the activities, with clear distinctions in experience and potential being evident. From this I have devised and attached descriptive labels. These reflect each repertoire's characteristics while I have also linked these to the original disaffected citizenry types proposed in Chapter 2. To support comparisons, I consider the following as a guide: scores of 0-.20 = low, .21-.40 = low-moderate, .41-.60 = moderate, .61-.80 = moderate-high, .81-1.00 = high.

I have called the most common class a *hands-off frustrated elector* repertoire, and it represents a third of the sample. It is a class in which members have a moderate-high likelihood of having previously voted (.72) and a high chance of believing they might do so in the future (.81). However, they have relatively little interest in participating in politics beyond this. Only on signing a petition do they demonstrate an interest which can be considered moderate-high while their activity history suggests only moderate levels of participation. They are evidently not wholly disengaged from politics, sometimes turning out (although to a lesser degree than some of the other classes), but appear satisfied to step back in between elections. Such a type being the most common in the BPS is not unanticipated. They are individuals who value voting on some level but are not necessarily passionate about political participation, perhaps having other competing interests. There are also, therefore, tendencies here towards a mobilised voter in that it suggests they may sometimes be influenced by duty or social pressure. There is no sustained interest evident. However, given only moderate-high turnout, they

still resemble more closely a frustrated elector (especially since the past turnout variable is not specific to 2010 and could reflect any number of elections).

Class 2, representing 28 per cent of the sample, I label as a *selective mobilised voter*. They are highly active and supportive of elections with a voting history rating of .92 and a willingness of .94. They also demonstrate similar levels of activity and potential on signing petitions, suggestive of a heightened interest in issue-based politics when compared to the first class. Equally, they are willing to consider contacting politicians, writing to newspapers, attending demonstrations, and engaging in boycotts at moderate, moderate-high, and even high levels. Their experiences on each are, as would be expected, slightly lower scoring but nevertheless suggest that should opportunities or needs arise, they could be motivated to pursue these activities. They are evidently, however, fairly selective and contained in the activities they are willing to consider undertaking and so do not adopt an extensive repertoire. They are not, for example, interested in more partisan activities or those which require them to assume more responsibility or a high profile role in a campaign. Their experiences tend to imply a preference for relatively low-intensity activities which either do not require on-going commitments (petitions, contacting) or which can be easily incorporated into daily routines (boycotts).

The third class is of particular interest in its closely resembling the participation preferences my model assumes to be connected to a marginalised citizen and still comprising a quarter of the sample (24 per cent). This *disengaged marginalised citizen* repertoire records low scores on all activities, both in terms of experience and willingness. Individuals appear to have no interest in engaging with politics in an active way and would likely not consider themselves political participants in the future. Their past voting history records a score of only .17 and their willingness to vote in the future is even lower (.12) indicating greater disillusionment. In light of this lack of electoral engagement and the class size within the sample – and the extreme and entrenched nature of its abstention – we might imagine these individuals are especially useful in understanding the participation puzzle for the wider population by making a sizable contribution to lower than expected turnout.

There are interesting contributions to theories of repertoire replacement which can be made by the fourth and fifth classes. The fourth, an *omnivorous mobilised voter*

repertoire, I have named taking inspiration from Hustinx et al's civic omnivores (2012). For Hustinx and colleagues, these individuals are active across politics and selective only to the extent that the activity they choose to use or pursue will likely depend on that which they believe is most appropriate or effective in a particular scenario on any given occasion. They do not limit themselves in their choices and consider all options available to them, making a calculated decision on which they will pursue. Importantly, this is not at the expense of voting with electoral participation also positioned as an influencing activity in their arsenal. A type matching these characteristics comes forward in the BPS. It represents only 8 per cent of the BPS sample yet is also the most electorally participative of all. Members have a 100 per cent rate of having voted in previous elections and continue to see the value of doing so (.99). Simultaneously, they are also the most consistently active at high and moderate-high levels. For example, 99 per cent have signed a petition, 90 per cent have contacted a politician, and 71 per cent have attended a demonstration. Even with evident variation in these activity types, they are the most active of the sample across them all.

Their willingness to participate is typically higher than their experience rates, implying there is also the potential for more action and that they will continue to be active participants in the future. Their alternative tendencies are not simply capturing preferences from an earlier life-cycle stage but remain present in their current political character. This extends to party-based activities and those which include taking on additional personal responsibilities, for example, 58 per cent being willing to consider holding office within a pressure group and 45 per cent standing as a candidate. They appear truly supportive of political participation and citizen involvement and are not alienated from partisan activities. Alternative participation can consequently co-exist with electoral participation among some of these more activist types and need not signify replacement.

The final class, also only 8 per cent of the sample, comes closest to representing repertoire replacement theory although alternative participation is still not preferred above voting. It is therefore too simplistic, on the basis of this sample's responses, to suggest lower than average turnout results from individuals replacing voting when they

adopt a more activist approach.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, this final group does to some extent reflect a combination of the frustrated elector and engaged activist's presumed repertoires. For example, there is clear commitment to voting in the future (.91) and yet their past voting behaviour – on a measure which is not even limited to the 2010 general election – is only moderate-high (.75). This is roughly on a par with that of the hands-off frustrated elector and while not especially low sees the distance between actual voting participation and prospective participation being the greatest of all. Their high support for electoral participation does not inevitably translate into similarly high turnout, unlike within the selective and omnivorous voters. They represent a *dormant engaged activist* repertoire. The same pattern is then repeated throughout the remaining activities suggesting that while they are not actively participating they value alternative participation to a high degree, as would be assumed within the engaged activist. They are aspirational in their approach – after the omnivorous repertoire, they display some of the highest levels of willingness – and yet their history of participation implies they are standby (Amnå and Ekman 2014) and monitorial (Schudson 1998), seemingly requiring some form of mobilisation in order to become active.

6.1.3. Non-voting repertoires and the disaffected citizenry

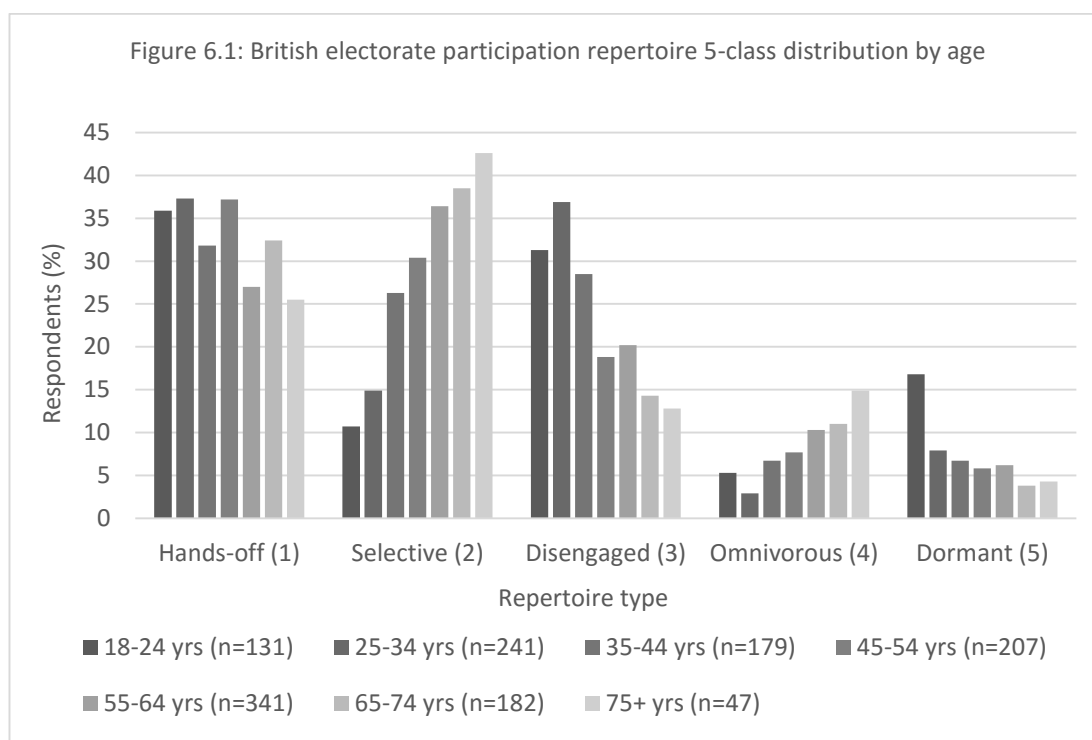
Given its size, all age groups have the greatest probability of being in Class 1 with a hands-off repertoire (Figure 6.1). This is unsurprising with many individuals simply engaging in politics when electoral opportunities are presented and media attention and social interest are typically highest. It also fits with those findings across the literature which claim voting remains the most common and, for many, only activity in which they willingly participate (Parry et al 1992; Hooghe and Marien 2014; Blais and Loewen 2011; Kaase and Marsh 1979). For younger generations, those aged 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44, the second most popular repertoire type is that of the disengaged marginalised citizen, one in which participation of any form is unlikely. As *H2* predicts, they therefore demonstrate an increased tendency towards a non-voting participation repertoire, and more so than others. For the remaining older age groups, if not hands-off, they are most likely to adopt a selective repertoire, participating through elections but also a select and limited number of fairly low intensity activities.

⁴⁶ Equally, when testing other class models no repertoire replacement group was observed, even within a BIC suggested 8-class model.

Simultaneously, the very youngest generation have a 16.8 per cent probability of expressing a dormant repertoire, more than twice the probability for any other age group and demonstrative to some extent of a second non-voting repertoire. Certainly individuals here have voted in the past more so than the disengaged marginalised citizens and are not wholly 'non-voting'. However, they are not as participative in elections as their willingness to vote would imply while they also vote less than the omnivorous and selective types. The suggestion is that they require additional mobilisation and/or encounter (and are more affected by) more deterrents. Young people also therefore display an increased probability of demonstrating the behavioural preferences connected to frustrated elector (and to some extent engaged activist) approaches. Combined, the findings support development of my model and ideas that today's youngest generation might display distinct non-voting (or lower-voting) preferences which are less likely to emerge within older generations. For one type, it reflects complete disengagement. For the others it corresponds with individuals not appearing as duty-bound to elections and even sometimes feeling less restricted to voting if they believe they can access and pursue a wide range of participation activities. Undoubtedly, however, their youth is also likely to be explaining their increased likelihood of a dormant (rather than historically active) repertoire, which makes the case for extending the analysis below to a larger, youth-specific sample.

Older age groups, against expectations, record greater potential than young people for being omnivorous in their approach. Being older certainly presents an advantage since they will have enjoyed more opportunities for being politically active but this finding remains significant for the development of my framework since they also demonstrate high, high-moderate, and moderate levels of willingness to participate and often at higher rates than reported for their past behaviour. The results refute a number of theories. For example, a history of participation can actually see individuals maintaining an interest in participating rather than allowing failures to deter them from future participation (see Topf 1995). It also suggests opportunities for alternative participation are not exclusively felt among young people and that resources associated with a youth life-cycle stage can be present beyond this age group. Older constituencies are clearly not disinclined to participate in politics beyond elections either, implying it is not only young people who are interested in pursuing non-electoral participation. This, alongside older groups' increased potential for adopting a contained repertoire – the second biggest class and one in which alternative participation is still supported in some forms – provides

further evidence to indicate it can be older generations who are most in favour of alternative participation and not younger ones. With past experience reported, there are also suggestions alternative participation is not a new phenomenon. Nevertheless, in both these cases alternative participation exists in combination with high turnout to make these ultimately ‘pro-voting’ repertoires.



Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout, n = 1328

A cross-tabulation which introduces education finds patterns to be more in line with established thinking. Non-HE individuals are equally likely to be hands-off as to be disengaged (33.0 and 33.2 per cent, respectively).⁴⁷ The HE group is instead evenly split between hands-off and selective tendencies (32.8 and 33.8 per cent, respectively). In support of *H2a*, HE individuals are over-represented in the selective (52.0 per cent), omnivorous (69.9 per cent), and dormant (57.3 per cent) types, while in support of *H2b* members of the hands-off and disengaged groups are more likely to be non-HE (56.5 and 79.0 per cent). This defends arguments that the absence of HE experiences can make individuals less likely to vote and provide them with fewer opportunities or incentives to become involved in politics beyond this. A non-HE constituency is where we might see the marginalised citizens. The extreme difference between this potential elector type and

⁴⁷ Non-HE sample, n=681; HE sample, n=527.

the four remaining types on turnout also suggests claims more closely linked to sorting model explanations – whereby there is a distinct group totally removed from politics – is having an especially detrimental impact on overall turnout rates, even if decreasing in size as HE expands.

To assess more fully how education and age combine to affect participation repertoires, alongside disaffection, I use multinomial logistic regression. Tables 6.2 and 6.3 present information on how elector characteristics are related to repertoire class membership alongside and when controlling for each other and the disaffection scale and deficit variables. The reference category for the dependent variable is the hands-off frustrated elector repertoire. The results reaffirm much of what has been seen above and situate the repertoires further within my own proposed ideal types. Individuals without HE experience are almost always more than likely than those at or graduated from university, to be hands-off frustrated electors. The only exception, as anticipated, is among the disengaged group, further strengthening propositions surrounding their marginalisation. Younger people, if not hands-off, have greater potential than older individuals for being either fully disengaged – again, in line with the marginalised citizen – or dormant yet expressing interest in a varied repertoire, similar to that of the engaged activist.

Issues of partisanship and politicised pro-voting networks do not have consistent effects, and in many respects – unlike for voting, previously – they do not influence individuals' participation preferences. Only in the case of civic omnivores, those mobilised to participate through all available activities, electoral and non-electoral, do they appear significant. A strong party supporter is more likely to be a civic omnivore than hands-off, and similarly individuals reporting strong support for voting among their friends and family. For the wider thesis, this suggests such factors might be crucial in moving an individual from being firstly interested in politics to actively engaging in it.

For disaffection across the two regressions, it is internal efficacy and to a lesser extent democratic ideals, rather than external efficacy and responsiveness which appear most important in determining whether an individual adopts a particular repertoire. For instance, a high level of internal efficacy makes individuals more likely to be selective, omnivorous, and dormant than to be hands-off, while they are less likely to be disengaged. Similar patterns are seen for democratic ideals in being able to move

someone from the position of being hands-off to being selective (when the ideals are high) or disengaged (when the ideals are low). The deficit scales in Table 6.3 further imply the importance of efficacy in shaping individuals' views towards political participation more broadly, and the positive influence of internal efficacy – which seems able to outweigh low external efficacy to encourage more active repertoires. Responsiveness, however, unlike for turnout is seen to not be as crucial. Instead, across all groups behavioural preferences tend to develop in response to the role the individuals themselves believe they should and can be playing in politics. Disaffection can therefore be linked to non-voting repertoires of activity with low internal efficacy – associated more with the alienated-disaffection – appearing to explain non-HE individuals' tendencies towards a marginalised citizen.

The adoption of preferences here is closely tied to claims that as individuals become more confident in their own political abilities. They are also more committed to citizen involvement in democracy. This is thought to occur with educational expansion and changes within educational approaches, particularly among the individuals benefitting most from educational expansion – the HE constituencies. They come to adopt wide ranging repertoires. In the very youngest generations, this can extend to a repertoire defined by latent potential, aspirations for engagement, and a more monitorial approach (see Dalton 2006, 2008a; Norris 2003; Martin 2012b; Hustinx et al 2012). Interestingly, by comparing coefficients the impact of internal efficacy, both on its own and when considered within an efficacy deficit, has particularly strong implications for these dormant electors. This class represents a group in which individuals are willing to participate but only very rarely do so. The deficit score suggests respondents in the BPS are more likely to adopt this position when their internal efficacy is high and their external efficacy low. The implication is that where a disjuncture on efficacy exists, for young people with HE experience there is an increased tendency towards being in favour of political participation but being reluctant to become active. Where the level of influence they believe they can exert is small, they do not engage. Thus there is again an indication of a frustration effect. This further supports my relating a dissatisfied-disaffection to frustrated electors and engaged activists.

	<i>Selective</i>			<i>Disengaged</i>			<i>Omnivorous</i>			<i>Dormant</i>	
	B (s.e)	Exp(B)		B (s.e)	Exp(B)		B (s.e)	Exp(B)		B (s.e)	Exp(B)
Gender (base = male)	-.002 (.193)	.998		-.156 (.275)	.856		-1.349 (.343)***	.260		-1.199 (.323)***	.301
Ethnicity (base = White British)	-.029 (.298)	.971		.067 (.431)	1.069		.449 (1.156)	1.567		-.251 (.464)	.778
HE experience (base = HE)	-.519 (.197)***	.595		.739 (.303)**	2.094		-.825 (.322)**	.438		-.329 (.307)	.720
Age	.031 (.006)***	1.032		-.022 (.009)**	.979		.030 (.010)***	1.030		-.017 (.009)*	.983
Party supporter (high = very strong)	.171 (.284)	1.186		-.124 (.420)	.883		2.007 (.462)***	7.440		.664 (.449)	1.943
Friends and family think voting is a waste of time (high = strongly disagree)	.072 (.316)	1.075		-.142 (.470)	.867		1.326 (.517)**	3.767		-.003 (.481)	.997
Internal efficacy scale	2.311 (.571)***	10.082		-2.250 (.776)***	.105		7.155 (1.077)***	1280.558		6.419 (1.040)***	613.204
External efficacy scale	.291 (.619)	1.337		1.317 (.888)	3.733		1.792 (.924)*	6.002		1.181 (.892)	3.258
Ideals scale	2.040 (.989)**	7.692		-6.051 (1.310)***	.002		2.494 (1.655)	12.104		.803 (1.574)	2.233
Responsiveness scale	-.076 (.649)	.927		-1.193 (.947)	.303		-.207 (.991)	.813		-.115 (1.004)	.892
Intercept	-4.112			4.374 (.996)***						-5.248 (1.316)***	
-2LL	(.720)***										
Model significance	1830.278										
Nagelkerke R ²	428.233***										
N	.446										
	820										

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout, ***p<.01, **p.05, * p<.1; intercept only model -2LL = 2258.510; Pearson = 3481.907***, Deviance 1830.278, p>.05

Table 6.3: Multinomial logistic regression, correlates of participation repertoire class membership with disaffection deficits (base = hands-off)									
	<i>Selective</i>			<i>Disengaged</i>			<i>Omnivorous</i>		
	B (s.e)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	B (s.e)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	B (s.e)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
Gender (base = male)	-.086 (.189)	.917	.947	-.054 (.260)	.947	.221	-1.391 (.314)***	.249	
Ethnicity (base = White British)	-.016 (.293)	.985	1.273	.242 (.403)	1.273	1.525	-.245 (.447)	.782	
HE experience (base = HE)	-.625 (.194)***	.535	2.286	.827 (.288)***	2.286	.359	-.422 (.296)	.656	
Age	.030 (.006)***	1.031	.983	-.018 (.008)**	.983	1.024	-.023 (.009)***	.977	
Party supporter (high = very strong)	.425 (.273)	1.529	.708	-.346 (.392)	.708	15.304	1.350 (.419)***	3.858	
Friends and family think voting is a waste of time (high = strongly disagree)	.287 (.305)	1.333	.452	-.794 (.425)*	.452	5.356	.260 (.457)	1.297	
Efficacy deficit scale	1.055 (.448)**	2.871	.214	-1.541 (.639)**	.214	8.107	2.293 (.669)***	9.900	
Responsiveness deficit scale	.569 (.535)	1.767	.227	-1.481 (.724)**	.227	2.370	.289 (.827)	1.335	
Intercept	-1.825 (.425)***			.442 (.531)			-.784 (.610)		
-2LL	1954.505								
Model significance	304.005***								
Nagelkerke R ²	.341								
N	820								

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout, ***p<.01, **p.05, * p<.1; intercept only model -2LL = 2258.510; Pearson = 3414.585**; Deviance 1954.505, p>.05

This analysis has therefore illustrated that there do appear to be distinct ways in which individuals choose and want to engage with politics, witnessed both in their actual behaviour and their participation potential. These are found to be associated with different socio-demographic groups and offer support for propositions that young people more than others adopt non- or limited-voting repertoires and, again, those anticipated to feature within the non-voting young disaffected citizenry types. There are evidently fewer mobilised voters in this constituency, offering support for pursuing *H2*'s key contention, that young people are more likely to adopt and pursue non-voting repertoires of participation. Further variation appears to support to some extent the sub-hypotheses. Dissatisfied-disaffection among an HE youth promotes more alternative repertoire, although not entirely at the expense of voting, while an alienated-disaffection among non-HE youth can, on occasion, encourage an inactive repertoire.

6.2. Participation preferences among Britain's young people

I have established the likelihood that young people adopt non-voting repertoires, uncovered apparent connections to disaffection, and started to observe educational variation. In an extension of Chapter 5, the analysis again points towards young people being characterised to a far greater extent than other, older electors as part of a non-voting disaffected citizenry. To look for further evidence suggestive of my proposed mechanisms and the varied impact of educational experience, I now examine variation among young people using the CITS data. Specifically, I look at non-voting young people (those who report not voting in the 2010 general election) and investigate patterns in their wider participation preferences. In what ways does a non-voting disaffected citizen manifest itself among young people and to what extent do distinct profiles within this mirror differential education?

I have once again adopted the criteria of Brady (1999) to define political participation and select the acts presented in Table 6.4. There are similarities with those previously included from the BPS but also the addition of some activities which could be more popular among young people, for example embarking on political action via social networking sites (Oser et al 2013). This reduces the risk of overall participation potential being under-estimated due to limited coverage of youth-specific activities and should

provide a more valid consideration of young people's political activities. Variables record the extent to which respondents themselves believe their future involvement in politics is probable, measured on a four-point scale from 'definitely not do this' to 'definitely do this'.⁴⁸ Again, self-judged participation potential can minimise an age bias, possible even in this narrowly age-defined youth sample. Moreover, the framework is developed to focus most on how non-voters view participation opportunities and approach the prospect of becoming politically active rather than the former activities they happen to have been involved in.

Before looking only at non-voters, however, initial descriptive statistics in Table 6.4 compare across the whole CITS sample for all five educational groups to provide some comparison to the earlier BPS study. Most notably, voting remains the activity which young people are most willing to contemplate pursuing, true not only of first-order general elections but of local and European Parliament elections. This replicates the wider electorate results and implies that even if young people believe they could engage in politics through alternative activities, this does not detract from there being a continued commitment to voting overall. Further education (FE) students, however, display a potentially greater dissatisfaction with elections than other groups if we compare these participation potential figures to actual turnout. Four-fifths (81.8 per cent) believe they will vote in future general elections, only approximately five percentage points fewer than HE undergraduates, yet only 30.4 per cent voted in 2010 with an almost 17.3 percentage point gap emerging between the two groups for their actual vote. In their principles, they are seemingly similarly committed to elections yet more strongly deterred when polling day itself arrives. Linked to the findings in Chapter 5 on disaffection, this may in part stem from their marginally greater criticism of politics (on external efficacy) and lower levels of political confidence; they possess an ideal of electoral participation but in the decision-making process, their costs and benefit calculations might point them towards abstention. Their higher trust levels, albeit still low, do not appear to compensate for a lack of confidence (low internal efficacy).

⁴⁸ Response options: definitely not do this, probably not do this, probably do this, and definitely do this.

Table 6.4: Political participation by educational experience (*probably do this* and *definitely do this* %)

Political participation						
'In the future will you...'/ 'If confronted by something you thought was wrong would you...'	No FE/HE experience	FE student	HE student (UG)	HE student (PG)	HE graduate	Average
Vote in a general election*	73.2 (408)	81.8 (162)	87.2 (347)	87.5 (140)	88.2 (217)	81.7 (1274)
Vote in a local election*	70.9 (395)	80.5 (157)	82.3 (321)	85.2 (138)	84.0 (200)	78.5 (1211)
Vote in a European election*	50.5 (244)	69.0 (120)	70.7 (261)	71.9 (110)	72.2 (161)	63.9 (896)
Join a political party*	12.8 (68)	21.8 (39)	13.7 (50)	14.8 (22)	13.2 (31)	14.4 (210)
Get involved in local politics*	15.9 (83)	36.6 (59)	23.1 (83)	26.3 (40)	21.0 (48)	22.0 (313)
Contact a newspaper*	30.8 (149)	47.6 (81)	40.0 (136)	39.6 (57)	36.7 (77)	37.1 (500)
Contact your MP*	27.3 (135)	43.6 (75)	40.9 (140)	42.8 (65)	37.4 (82)	36.0 (497)
Take part in a radio phone-in	21.9 (113)	24.0 (41)	19.3 (68)	23.8 (36)	14.2 (32)	20.5 (290)
Take part in a non-violent protest or rally*	33.2 (170)	55.7 (93)	61.2 (218)	52.8 (75)	38.7 (86)	45.9 (642)
Block traffic as a form of protest*	14.1 (75)	20.8 (36)	16.8 (58)	20.0 (30)	5.8 (13)	14.9 (212)
Take part in a violent demonstration*	6.1 (34)	12.2 (23)	6.2 (24)	10.7 (17)	3.3 (8)	6.9 (106)
Start a Facebook group about a political or social issue*	18.2 (98)	36.0 (62)	27.1 (98)	27.5 (41)	13.1 (30)	22.7 (329)
Start a Twitter campaign about a political or social issue*	8.6 (47)	19.4 (34)	13.5 (50)	18.5 (29)	8.4 (20)	12.1 (180)

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), counts in parentheses, *Chi-square test, $p < .05$.

For alternative participation, engaging in a non-violent protest or rally, contacting an MP, and contacting a newspaper are the most popular showing some similarities again with the young people in the BPS sample. The three on-course student categories (FE, HE UG, and HE PG) demonstrate the highest levels of interest here. Being a student itself might therefore present opportunities for alternative participation associated with the

politicising environment of educational institutions, student union politics, and the student lifestyle (Crossley 2008; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Schulman and Levine 2012; McAdam 1986). Beyond this observation, however, there is a relative lack of consistency. No single group is the most attracted to all activities although interestingly FE students are some of the most positive about participating in politics outwith elections, despite their lower turnout and lower internal efficacy.

To assess the variations further I have conducted exploratory principal components analysis (PCA).⁴⁹ Using varimax rotation and a criteria of Eigenvalues greater than one, doing so uncovers a two-factor dichotomy split between electoral and non-electoral activity (Table 6.5) (also indicated by a corresponding scree plot). Despite some observed variation within the non-electoral factor this supports combining the variables into two comparable scales (electoral, $\alpha = .866$; non-electoral, $\alpha = .884$).

Table 6.5: Principal components analysis of self-reported political participation potential	
Factor	Political participation activities – self-reported future potential (factor loading in parentheses)
1	Vote in local election (.903) Vote in general election (.888) Vote in European election (.799)
2	Block traffic as form of protest (.752) Start Twitter campaign regarding a political or social issue (.742) Start Facebook group regarding a political or social issue (.740) Take part in radio phone-in (.701) Take part in violent demonstration (.694) Get involved in local politics (.656) Contact newspaper (.622) Join political party (.621) Take part in non-violent protest march or rally (.620) Contact MP (.582)

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), n = 1,050, conducted using Principal Components Analysis with Varimax rotation

One-way ANOVA tests report significant variation according to educational experience for both scales: electoral, $F(4, 1364) = 19.466, p < .001$; non-electoral, $F(4, 1039) = 12.085, p < .001$. On both, the Levene's statistic is non-significant, undermining the principal of homogeneity of variance and leading me to use a Games Howell post hoc test on each to

⁴⁹ A Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin statistic of .870 suggests sampling adequacy while a significant Bartlett's test of sphericity – $\chi^2 (78, n=970) = 6248.868, p < .001$ – indicates correlation between the variables. Both these statistics support use of this technique for the thirteen indicators.

observe where the differences are most pronounced. Evidently from the absolute scores, there is a gradual increase in support with educational status on electoral participation potential. The Games Howell test finds the only significant differences, however, to be between pursuing post-compulsory schooling and possessing no post-compulsory experience. For alternative, non-electoral participation, however, the post-hoc test reaffirms the descriptive observations from Table 6.4 with the crucial difference appearing to be between non-students (including graduates) and current on-course students. From the scores in Table 6.6 there nevertheless remains further variation in levels of preference between these educational groups. Clearly all give priority to electoral participation above alternative, non-electoral acts. For FE students, however, the deficit between these scales is just .33 whereas for postgraduate students it is as high as .48. The degree to which elections are preferred therefore varies across groups suggesting the two components should be assessed in tandem when attempting to establish young people's overarching political participation approaches. Young people without post-compulsory educational experience mirror most closely the marginalised citizen – lowest potential on both activities – to offer further support for *H2b*.

Table 6.6: Electoral and non-electoral self-reported participation potential scores by educational experience						
	No HE/FE	FE	HE (UG)	HE (PG)	Graduate	Average
Electoral	.60 (466)	.70 (170)	.73 (364)	.74 (147)	.76 (218)	.69 (1364)
Non-electoral	.26 (363)	.37 (130)	.34 (257)	.34 (120)	.28 (169)	.31 (1039)
Deficit	.34	.33	.39	.40	.48	.38

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), n counts in parentheses.

A connection between these tendencies and turnout can also be observed. Voters are significantly more likely to score highly on the electoral participation scale, unsurprisingly, with a mean of .82 ($s=.21$) compared to .58 ($s=.27$) for non-voters.⁵⁰ Interest in more alternative forms of political participation also appears positively associated with turnout, implying the two exist in a complementary rather than conflictual way, although the difference between the two groups is much smaller. Voters

⁵⁰ Independent samples T-test, $t(1332.642) = -18.048$, $p<.001$.

score on average .33 ($s=.19$) with non-voters scoring .29 ($s=.19$).⁵¹ Indications are that if an individual is in favour of political participation of any form they will be more likely to vote than those who are not.

6.3. A typology of young non-voters

To explore how participation preferences can vary across the non-voting youth sample, I turn again to LCA which while, once more, not theory-testing can offer a useful expansion of the PCA above. While the PCA clearly identifies two factors and can be used to make some helpful comparisons between educational groups, it is less well-equipped for exploring possible comparisons between different types of non-voter, and variation within educational groups on their likely association with these. For instance, rather than only studying educational groups' scores on each factor, LCA offers flexibility in comparing a range of potential types where activities from both factors combine and operate at different levels. It can be used to explore how some HE individuals might best align with the attitudes of one non-voter type while other HE individuals better meet the response patterns of another. In doing so, it can develop our thinking about the possibility of certain types existing among Britain's young people and if so, offer support for further examining the causal mechanism which is thought to be driving this. Equally, it can alert us to likely 'non-mechanisms' if and when hypothesised types do not emerge.

Again, it is a method which offers opportunities for using nominal and ordinal level data, that which is available in the CITS too, and provides statistical tests for assessing model fit. My model, from its theoretical underpinnings, assumes there are three notable non-voting types (engaged activist, frustrated elector, and marginalised citizen). However, while the proposed framework is developed around these identified eligible but non-voting elector types, there are again always possibilities for additional combinations of preferences to emerge which are as yet absent in the literature. Equally, it may be that not all the proposed types of my framework are actually present in the context of today's youth in Britain. As a first stage I have therefore used the factor scores derived by the principal components analysis above relating to electoral and non-electoral participation scales to perform exploratory K-means cluster analysis. This allows me to assess the suitability of the three-type model for non-voters.

⁵¹ Independent samples T-test, $t(1037) = -3.579$, $p < .001$.

Two clusters appear particularly distinct. Cluster 1 suggests there is a group which scores low on both factors – perhaps akin to the marginalised citizen, disengaged from all forms of available participation – while cluster 2 which scores high for electoral participation yet low for non-electoral, similar to the standard frustrated elector I have posited. However, visual inspection suggests there are instances of clusters overlapping – potentially indicative of additional clusters currently unaccounted for. The Euclidian distance between these groups (1.63) is much smaller than the distance each cluster is from cluster 3 (cluster 1 = 2.42; cluster 2 = 2.23). Again, this suggests there may be a group whose scores fall between that of the first two clusters. At the same time, while Cluster 3 is distinct in its higher factor scores for non-electoral participation, there is great deal of variation on the electoral factor score suggesting this too may be masking an additional cluster. For example, in my own framework the engaged activist who should reject voting in favour of non-electoral activity. The cluster analysis, however, suggests some individuals may record high scores on both factors (upper right-hand quadrant).

Following this exploratory analysis, LCA identifies the distinct non-voter types which extend beyond the three categories originally envisaged. Using the same practice detailed previously, I rely again principally on the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) and percentage change in the likelihood ratio chi-square statistic to determine the number of classes (see Magidson and Vermunt 2004: 176–177). In seeking to observe patterns within the data I tested models ranging from one to seven classes. The models relate exclusively to the non-voters in the CITS sample and employ all the variables listed in Table 6.4. These are included in a binary format where one equals definitely/probably do this and zero equals definitely/probably not do this.⁵²

Wanting the BIC figure again to be as low as possible the results point towards the adoption of a model in which five classes are used.⁵³ The smallest cluster in such a model

⁵² LCA was also conducted using responses in their original four-point ordinal scales and revealed similar results. For the purposes of analysis however, the results using the binary format variables presented clearer classes for discussion.

⁵³ 4-class: LL = -1916.90, BIC_{LL} = 4158.60, L² = 804.75, % change L² from 1-class model = 61.77, classification error = .06; 5-class: LL = -1859.37, BIC_{LL} = 4126.21, L² = 689.68, % change L² from 1-class model = 67.23, classification error = .07; 6-class: LL = -1839.61, BIC_{LL} = 4169.37, L² = 650.17, % change L² from 1-class model = 69.11, classification error = .08. Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI); n = 367; LL = log-likelihood, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion, L² = likelihood ratio chi-square statistic.

represents 8 per cent of the non-voting sample. This does not appear unduly small to prevent these categories being usefully employed in analysis with educational variation employed in disaggregation. Moreover, while the reduction in L^2 from the model of complete independence (one class) continues as the number of classes increases, the rate of change slows after the 5-class model (see Magidson and Vermunt 2004: 176-7). Nonetheless, in order to ensure I have not missed any important variation, I have also studied the results relating to the 6-class model. As with the earlier BPS model, there appears to be little theoretical gain from increasing the number of classes with no additional, especially distinct response patterns emerging (see Oser et al 2013: 95).⁵⁴

6.3.1. Identifying the non-voters

Profile statistics are presented in Table 6.7. Of the five classes, one of the largest represents approximately 28 per cent of non-voting young people. They are a type which most closely reflects traditional thinking on non-voting behaviour, namely that it results from possessing no interest in or commitment to political participation. An individual matching the characteristics of this class has only a 12 per cent chance of believing they would definitely or probably vote in a general election. This matches the disengaged marginalised citizen repertoire in the BPS. Simultaneously, their own assessment of future participation suggests they are even less likely to contemplate more alternative political activities. On some the probability is zero, including the two online social network activities which through their reach and ease might ordinarily be thought to offer opportunities for political engagement. Instead we see, as some academic research is finding, online activity is typically complementary to other forms of participation rather than a distinct repertoire in itself, even if it is the preferred method (Baumgartner and Morris 2010; Livingstone et al 2007; Oser et al 2013). There is not a clear online activist type in the sample.

While these observations alone are not indicative of alienation *per se* – the indicators do not explicitly capture political interest and engagement levels – they are suggestive of a level of political detachment. Even with this long-term perspective relating to future behaviours, young people here simply do not anticipate becoming politically active. With

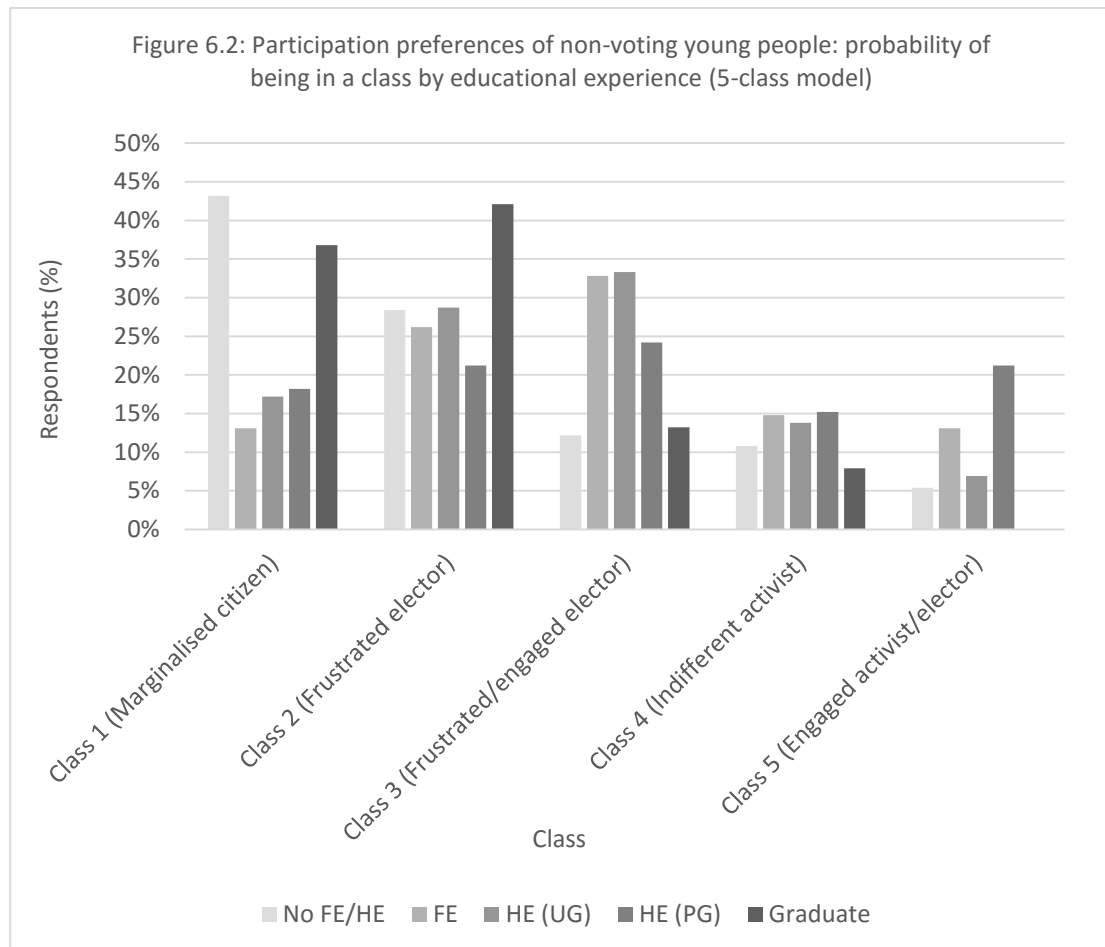
⁵⁴ Moreover, by increasing the number of classes even more to seven, for example, the emergent class sizes start to become much smaller so making further analysis more challenging. Significant Wald statistics ($p < .05$) for each future participation indicator suggest all can be retained in the model.

the LCA able to assign cases to each class, 67.3 per cent of class one members are individuals with no post-compulsory education. Non-FE/HE individuals also have a higher likelihood of any other educational group of displaying this combination of responses, at 43.2 per cent (see Figure 6.2). It therefore appears fitting to label this class, as my original framework has proposed, as a marginalised citizen, representing individuals without HE experience and lacking in any intent to participate politically, indicative of alienation.

Table 6.7: Profile table for 5-class participation preference model of non-voting young people

	Marginalised citizen (Class 1)	Frustrated elector (Class 2)	Frustrated/ engaged elector (Class 3)	Indifferent activist (class 4)	Engaged activist/ elector (Class 5)
Cluster Size	0.28	0.28	0.22	0.14	0.08
Vote in a general election	0.12	0.98	0.95	0.42	0.76
Vote in a local election	0.03	0.97	0.98	0.29	0.90
Vote in a European election	0.02	0.63	0.89	0.11	0.96
Join a political party	0.03	0.04	0.23	0.02	0.88
Get involved in local politics	0.00	0.05	0.42	0.11	0.95
Contact a newspaper	0.07	0.12	0.66	0.51	0.90
Contact your MP	0.02	0.05	0.71	0.19	0.89
Take part in a radio phone-in	0.05	0.12	0.23	0.27	0.92
Take part in a non-violent protest or rally	0.07	0.25	0.64	0.67	1.00
Block traffic as a form of protest	0.00	0.00	0.16	0.42	0.89
Take part in a violent demonstration	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.17	0.81
Start a Facebook group about a political or social issue	0.00	0.06	0.39	0.30	0.93
Start a Twitter campaign about a political or social issue	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.20	0.91

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), n = 367; conducted using Latent Gold 5.0.



Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), n = 367

Both the second and third classes, together accounting for half the sample, share a high level of support for electoral participation, particularly at general and local elections. This reinforces the importance of studying variation among non-voters themselves, as I have proposed. It highlights how we cannot simply label non-voters as being less committed to voting. While 71.4 per cent of all non-voters state they will probably or definitely vote in future general elections, in these two classes the probability rises to an average of .97. Thus while in class 1, the seemingly marginalised citizens, non-voting is clearly aligned with a lack of intent, the abstention of classes 2 and 3 is more surprising. They seem almost wholly convinced of their future participation. Both can therefore be defined as being frustrated electors, not opposed to voting but appearing to encounter obstacles and/or disincentives which in 2010 prevented them from turning out. Within this overarching frustrated elector category, however, the two classes also display differences which add greater sophistication to my original proposal.

In class 2, despite a very high level of support for future electoral participation individuals do not appear compelled to participate outwith elections. Their interest in alternative participation activities ranks almost as low as the identified marginalised citizens. Of these activities, the most popular – participating in a non-violent rally or protest – only enjoys a positive response likelihood of 25 per cent. The vast majority of individuals in the class are therefore committed only to voting. In contrast, class 3 members demonstrate a higher level of interest in alternative forms of political activity. Writing to a newspaper, contacting an MP, and attending a rally all rate higher than .6. There is subsequently a more activist leaning within this group with electoral participation, on a relative level, not prioritised to quite the same extent. They are willing to consider other influencing methods. Voting is still prioritised, implying this group remains on balance closer to my frustrated elector than an engaged activist. Looking at educational associations, graduates are most likely to fall in class 2 than any other class (42.1 per cent) while class 3 is the most popular type for FE students (32.8 per cent), undergraduates (33.3 per cent), and postgraduates (24.2 per cent).

Two points should be highlighted. Firstly, there is an evident educational advantage in turnout preferences. While all these young people abstained in 2010, for these more educated young people compared to the non-FE/HE individuals, there is a recognition of voting as an important and appealing mode of participation. This is suggestive of pro-voting processes occurring at some level. Simultaneously, within this, individuals who are currently students report greater interest in combining this electoral commitment with the pursuit of alternative activities. Graduates, conversely, support voting almost exclusively when thinking about future activity. Consequently, there is further reason for believing student status itself might generate opportunities and perceptions which alter an individual's overarching approach to political participation and encourage greater alternative participation repertoires.

From my original framework, members of class 4 (14 per cent of the sample) could to a small degree be considered engaged activists who have adopted tendencies towards repertoire replacement. While their potential for alternative participation is not always greater than that of class 3, they express higher intent on activities more removed from formal party politics (such as joining a political party, writing to an MP, and getting

involved in local politics). Crucially, they do not prioritise voting either, demonstrating greater interest in other activities. Fewer than half would vote in a general election and only 11 per cent in a European election, yet 67 per cent believe they would attend a rally, 51 per cent contact a newspaper, and 42 per cent block traffic. Therefore, even if a young people (and non-voters within this) have not all rejected voting in favour of alternative participation, there is a small group which may be doing so. Nevertheless, I have labelled this group as an *indifferent activist* (rather than engaged) since their commitment to any form of participation remains relatively low. As with the more activist frustrated elector, on-course students have the greatest potential for adopting this approach, particularly FE students. They perhaps benefit from the opportunities created by their student status and location but experience less electoral mobilisation than comparable HE students and/or develop a lower sense of internal efficacy.

The final class also displays characteristics associated with an engaged activist although from a more civic omnivore perspective (Hustinx et al 2012). This group represents only approximately 8 per cent of non-voting young people yet is significant in its high levels of support for alternative participation. Using the scales generated using the principal components analysis, this group even scores marginally higher overall for non-electoral activity ($m=.72, s=.10$) than electoral ($m=.71, s=.18$) despite the diversity of activities included within the former scale. There are therefore suggestions of competing preferences in which voting can lose out. They maintain an interest in voting, however, and unexpectedly most for European and local elections. This might reflect antipathy towards Westminster politics, which arguably enjoys the highest profile in the media and conversations while still being fairly supportive of activity which occurs at a local level – where decisions are taken closer to the communities they will effect – or European, international level. In this class, 72.4 per cent are on-course students, again suggesting a high level of interest in alternative participation can be prevalent among those young people still positioned within educational institutions and enjoying the lifestyle advantages and resources associated with being a student.

Five classes of non-voting youth appear preferable for ensuring the most parsimonious model yet nested within this there are three general themes which I believe come forward. Types identified here correspond approximately with the three characters of my proposed framework. One group of non-voting young people reject all forms of participation (class 1 – marginalised citizens), another is highly supportive of electoral

participation but relatively unenthusiastic about alternative political activities (classes 2 and 3 – frustrated electors), and a third demonstrates an interest in alternative participation equal to, if not on occasion greater than, their commitment to future voting (classes 4 and 5 – engaged activists). The prevalence of these groups in the sample suggests that while all three types teach us something about youth abstention, for the most part non-voters will reflect characteristics associated either with frustration and dissatisfaction (50 per cent) or marginalisation and alienation (28 per cent). Even within the remaining 21 per cent who report activist tendencies, class 4 displays similarities with class 1 in being predominantly anti-elections and class 5, despite its higher interest in alternative activity also mirrors the pro-voting approach of classes 2 and 3.

While the sample size is necessarily reduced if cases with missing information are excluded, this process provides an indication of how activities might be grouped within repertoires of potential activity. I have re-run the analysis with missing cases included – a possibility within LCA in Latent Gold 5.0 – to assess if and how these types might exist in the whole non-voting CITS sample (n=668). Doing so, I find a marginalised citizen group remains although it is slightly less prevalent (24 per cent) while the frustrated electors of class 2 and 3 are more common at 31 and 27 per cent, respectively. Classes 4 and 5 are largely unchanged at 11 and 8 per cent. The findings, however, are not drastically different and similar response patterns can still be observed within the three identified themes.

6.4. Characterising the non-voting youth

Previously, it has been shown that young people in Britain often demonstrate disaffection and are more likely to abstain as a result. This chapter has extended this argument by finding they are also often characterised by political participation approaches in which non-voting behaviour is more likely. Further disaggregation and analysis observes that for some young people, there is a wholesale rejection of political participation, whatever its form. For others there is support for voting but this does not inevitably translate into heightened turnout rates, nor does voting always enjoy primacy in their repertoires of potential activity. Both education and disaffection attitudes are further found to correspond with these non-voting repertoire types. Less well-educated young people, those not pursuing post-compulsory schooling, are especially likely to report withdrawal from politics. Moreover, where internal efficacy is low and there is a

level of indifference towards democratic ideals, often associated with these young people, there is further disengagement. Meanwhile, more educated individuals tend to report at least some commitment to electoral participation. On-course students here are also more willing to consider a wide ranging participation repertoires. Alongside this, when internal efficacy and democratic expectations rise, political participation through both electoral and alternative activities starts to rise. Interestingly, absolute disaffection measures, relating to individuals' perceptions of politics – and the relative deficit scores calculated using these – are less significant in understanding repertoire preferences. While these matter for turnout, particularly for young people on issues of responsiveness – and can tip the balance away from voting on polling day – they do not appear to damage the reputation of voting as a democratic principle. Approaches to participation are instead more heavily influenced by personal considerations of ability and interest.

The analysis so far, and the exploratory work using LCA, therefore start to build a case in which many young people might be viewed as comprising a non-voting disaffected citizenry, and more so than other, older electors. Suggestions are that within a more educated electorate, as education has shifted in emphasis and expanded, the younger generations most directly affected by the changes, are becoming less guaranteed in a positive turnout decision. They are more heavily influenced by perceptions of politics and themselves as political actors as they develop their participation preferences and make turnout decisions. The puzzle of participation is perhaps not as puzzling as first appears. Instead, there can be alternative education effects with these changing educational experiences encouraging a more dominant critical political participation approach to emerge. Importantly, however, while young people are abstaining they are seemingly making this decision within the context of different political characters. There is no single repertoire of participation they prefer, implying their decision-making and interactions with politics involve different processes. This chapter has helped further in exploring possible variations. It hints at a two-stage process, there first being a need to develop an interest in politics and voting – something lacking in the marginalised citizen – and secondly, a need to overcome the reluctance to vote when elections occur, as experienced by the frustrated electors. As stated, LCA does not allow for direct theory-testing, however, so it is to this that my final empirical chapter now turns, investigating mechanisms through which these distinct types emerge among today's young people in Britain.

7. Education's effects in the non-voting youth

The establishment of the non-voting youth typology within the Citizens in Transition Survey (CITS), identifies three key areas for investigation and offers initial support for the young citizen types originally proposed. These usefully correspond with *H3*, *H4*, *H5*, and *H6* and relate specifically to mechanisms which are implicit within the behavioural manifestations (actions and preferences) associated with each abstention type. This chapter offers a direct extension of the typology development, continuing to use CITS data to assess the reasons why different forms of abstention emerge among young people in Britain today.

The first issue of concern centres on pro-voting members of the CITS sample, namely all those respondents who judge themselves as being voters in the future. It asks why some of these individuals voted in 2010 while others did not; what can cause a young person who is seemingly pro-voting (and highly educated) to abstain? It therefore requires a comparison between the frustrated elector classes explored by the latent class analysis (LCA) – those which overall were most prevalent in the non-voter sample (classes 2, 3, and to a lesser extent 5) – and those young people who share a similar willingness to vote and did actually vote when the opportunity arose. A continuation of tests surrounding the disaffection hypothesis here is designed to examine the impact of critical views and demands on young people's behavioural choices. The argument is that all these individuals, voting and non-voting, will support the electoral ideals of representative democracy and feel politically capable. However, among non-voters this future commitment to voting struggles to compete with their more negative perceptions of politics when they develop. This initial builds on tests related to *H1* in which non-voting young people were established as being especially disaffected. Additionally, thoughts surrounding the mobilised voter, lead me to consider partisanship in particular, as I examine how disaffection attitudes might be mitigated for some young people by alternative mobilisers, including the election campaign and party political offers. The analysis uses the earlier logistic regression structure to test:

H5: The negative effect of disaffection on turnout is minimised among young people with HE experience if and when they feel able to identify with a political party.

The next area of inquiry returns to the consideration of specifically non-voting young people. Questions are raised as to why some young people, typically those with some form of post-compulsory schooling, maintain an interest in voting while other young people reject it. It relates to the differences witnessed between the so-labelled marginalised citizens (class 1 in the non-voting youth LCA, and to a lesser degree class 4), and the remaining non-voting CITS sample. To explore this, I test the relative explanatory strength of a more traditional and direct civic education hypothesis – where a high educational level alone boosts commitment to voting – and arguments found within sorting model theory. These include the indirect effects operating through social positioning and network interactions as well as, in my own developments of the theory, resultant disaffection. This proposed mix of indirect and direct effects points to structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques. From this, I can test:

H3: Young people without HE experience are the least likely electoral group to vote because they encounter weaker mobilisation in the form of politically engaged social networks.

H4: The exclusion from politically engaged social networks further reduces the turnout potential of young people without HE experience by encouraging disaffection in the form of alienation, characterised by low expectations and negative perceptions.

Finally, I consider factors which might lead some young people to support alternative participation activities more so than others in order to explain any tendencies towards a more activist repertoire. There is little reason to suspect such activities have replaced voting for any ‘typical’ young person. Equally, as presented, individuals willing to pursue such activities comprise only a small component of my non-voting sample⁵⁵ (and we might assume Britain’s young people). Taken as a distinct group, they contribute less to our overall understanding of youth abstention. However, there are indications that on-course students appear to be more in favour of these and so it has potential to provide additional insights into education’s varied effects on participation more broadly. Therefore, in trying to understand how education impacts on political participation approaches, within which turnout decisions are found, I conclude the empirical analysis by investigating a student versus non-student dichotomy using SEM. I test if and how

⁵⁵ Predominantly, classes 3, 4, and 5, to varying degrees.

opportunities for political participation are responsible for more positive views of non-electoral activities:

H6: The negative impact of disaffection on turnout is exacerbated among young people with on-course HE experience through increased opportunities for alternative participation.

7.1. The non-voting pro-voting youth

The first area demanding investigation is the abstention of seemingly pro-voting young people. Why, if they are strongly convinced they will vote in the future at a range of elections, did individuals not vote in 2010? Having excluded individuals from the sample who would have been too young to vote in 2010, it is unlikely to reflect simple ineligibility. My frustrated elector explanation argues that the difference between voters and non-voters relates primarily to disaffection, with additional variation expected to emerge in connection with party mobilisation (a less overt but arguably useful indicator of disaffection with party politics). To test these claims, I return to the complete CITS sample, comprising voters *and* abstainers, before selecting for analysis only those individuals who score at least .67 on the scale created for Table 6.6.⁵⁶ This cut-off point is chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the sample average is .67 so the study here will relate to those individuals who report average or above average levels of support for electoral participation. Moreover, in recoding the original variables between zero and one where responses were provided on a four-point ordinal scale, .67 is the point at which individuals claim they will at least 'probably' pursue the activity, if not 'definitely'. Thus the analysis will also relate to those individuals who consider themselves likely rather than unlikely to participate.

Within this newly created pro-voting sample, 60.0 per cent voted (pro-voting sample, n=852) while the majority of individuals report at least some form of post-compulsory education (74.0 per cent). 61.6 per cent have HE experience. The results of the logistic regression for the pro-voting sample are presented in Table 7.1, designed to mirror the regressions conducted previously.

⁵⁶ The average score, scaled between zero and one, combining participation potential at future general, local, and European Parliament elections.

Table 7.1: Binary logistic regression: youth turnout at the 2010 General Election among pro-voting youth

	<i>I</i>		<i>II</i>	
	B (s.e)	Exp(B)	B (s.e)	Exp(B)
Age (base = 22-24 years)				
18-19 years	-.213 (.254)	.808	-.201 (.275)	.818
20-21 years	-.422 (.208)**	.656	-.478 (.220)**	.620
Gender (base = male)				
	-.371 (.202)*	.690	-.382 (.214)*	.683
Ethnicity (base = White British)				
	-1.257 (.220)***	.284	-1.324 (.236)***	.266
Parent social class (base = higher managerial)				
Never worked/LT unemployed	.393 (.459)	1.481	.519 (.530)	1.680
Routine and manual	-.367 (.222)*	.693	-.405 (.236)*	.667
Intermediate	.290 (.247)	1.337	.299 (.264)	1.348
Educational status (base = No HE or FE)				
FE	-1.285 (.305)***	.277	-1.347 (.325)***	.260
HE (UG)	-.480 (.253)*	.619	-.482 (.272)*	.618
HE (PG)	-.048 (.309)	.953	-.106 (.327)	.900
HE (Graduate)	.520 (.301)*	1.683	.637 (.325)*	1.891
Internal efficacy				
complR1 (high = strongly disagree)	.049 (.392)	1.050	-.162 (.424)	.851
knowR1 (high = strongly disagree)	1.163 (.418)***	3.201	1.221 (.489)**	3.390
External efficacy				
infgov1 (high = strongly agree)	.612 (.392)	1.843	.314 (.426)	1.370
loccam1 (high = strongly agree)	-.133 (.466)	.875	.212 (.672)	1.236
viewsR1 (high = strongly disagree)	-.500 (.427)	.606	-.525 (.256)	.592
Responsiveness				
nodiffR1 (high = strongly disagree)	.319 (.376)	1.375	.017 (.410)	1.017
trustpol (high = completely)	.737 (.582)	2.089	.862 (.621)	2.368
trustgov (high = completely)	-.435 (.509)	.647	-.758 (.549)	.468
Partisan (base = party supporter)			-.651 (.195)***	.522
Discuss politics with other people (high = strongly agree)			.163 (.426)	1.177
Friends are not interested in politics (high = strongly disagree)			.412 (.410)	1.510
Constant				
	.397 (.504)		.726 (.571)	
-2LL				
	768.136		685.389	
Model significance				
	119.265***		136.718***	
Hosmer-Lemeshow				
	18.157***		6.936	
Nagelkerke R²				
	.223		.270	
% correctly classified				
	67.2		71.6	
N				
	736		686	

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI), weighted by youth turnout at 2010 general election (44% - Ipsos-MORI 2010), ***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.1

In conflict with the critical citizen foundations of my frustrated electors, disaffection attitudes do not appear to diminish the likelihood of voting (Model *I*). Only young people's level of political knowledge self-assessed against their peers – indicative of their

internal efficacy – is able to differentiate significantly between voters and non-voters. Believing their competence is equal to if not better than that of other young people makes individuals 3.2 times more likely to vote. This suggests that where individuals are frustrated and abstain it is not always directed at the political system. The negative views are instead something which all young people still appear to have a tendency towards. Rather, the frustration which sets them apart from a voting youth is a lack of confidence in themselves as political actors. Despite being supportive of elections, in the current circumstances they do not feel equipped to participate. Educational differences remain significant to some extent. Graduates are the most likely to have voted (although, $p < .1$ only). Interestingly, those young people still in education, specifically FE and HE undergraduates are less likely to vote than the individuals with no post-compulsory schooling despite their shared willingness to vote. This is significant in the case of FE students. It may reflect obstacles associated with student status – for example, registration requirements – and/or life-cycle factors in which the delayed entry into adult roles of students makes elections less relevant in the short-term (Smets 2012; Bhatti et al 2012). Similarly, an age advantage is enjoyed by the older respondents.

The improved model fit for model II – increased Nagelkerke R^2 and reduced log-likelihood ratio – suggest these variables add explanatory power to the model and indeed, more significant relationships emerge which can be used to develop our understanding of turnout variation. Social networks and levels of politicisation within these, however, do not impact upon turnout itself, at least not directly. Voters and non-voters in this group are not likely to find their social interactions markedly different in respect of political content or frequency. The implication is that they are both located within similar networks and that these may, as will be explored later, be responsible for their adopting the pro-voting approach indicated by an electoral participation potential score of at least .67. On their own, however, these network interactions cannot guarantee a positive turnout decision. Differences between the two behavioural outcomes are instead clearly seen in partisanship, a non-partisan being 47.8 per cent less likely to have voted. Relative political knowledge as an indicator of internal efficacy remains a notable contributory factor, however. This is in contrast to the whole-sample regression (Table 5.5), and implies that while not significant in differentiating across all young people this can be important among those who have commitment to voting in weakening their resolve to turn out on the day.

Consequently, the difference between frustrated electors and mobilised voters seems not to be centred on a pure disaffection concept whereby the former is more critical in its assessment of politics. Nor is it connected to recruitment, overt and covert, which comes from being located among politically engaged networks. Rather the dissatisfaction of non-voters here appears to be driven by the absence of a political party which with they feel an affiliation and which can drive interest. This offers support for *H5*. They do not see one party representing their concerns above others and do not express loyalty to a single party which would see them turn out in support of this. As such, they are not mobilised or motivated to turn out; the costs of the act of voting are not offset by the chance to vote for a preferred party or candidate. Equally, this appears reflected in their political interest, non-voters in their responses implying they are more turned off from politics than those who turn out. These observations remain indicative of some form of frustration, suggesting this description remains applicable to these particular non-voters. The label simply needs to be adapted from being solely concerned with a generalised dissatisfied-disaffection – something which actually seems to affect all young people (Chapter 5) – to an election and party specific form of dissatisfaction. All the young people in Table 7.1 have reported being encouraged to participate and see this as a democratic ideal to aspire to. Some, however, have an uneasy relationship with the reality of elections, displaying a level of higher disaffection towards the world of formal party politics which they must engage with in order to vote in a meaningful way.

The mobilised voters therefore do not appear distinct in their social networks or in being more positive about elections and/or politics. They share similar attitudes to the frustrated electors and so even these individuals might be considered disaffected, perhaps permitting the application of the disaffected citizenry label across all the youth electorate. As earlier analysis showed, many young people report being dissatisfied with and untrusting of politics at a Westminster level. Where these individuals differ most from other pro-voting youth is in their having more interest in politics and seeing themselves as being represented by political parties. They are also typically older and outwith education implying that as young people leave education and enter ‘full’ adulthood, the presentation of formal politics from parties starts to appear more relevant and engaging. Within the participation puzzle, if the student population itself continues to grow as HE expands, there may be at least in the short-term an increase in the number of young people choosing to abstain before the number falls as they enter into professional careers and settle into adulthood.

7.2. Non-voters' electoral participation potential

Most research testing ideas within Nie et al's sorting model (1996) adopts multi-level approaches with modelling techniques which allow for both individual education levels and that of the society in which individuals live to be included, for example through interaction effects (Tenn 2005; Campbell 2009; Helliwell and Putnam 2007; Persson 2011, 2013). While there are clear merits in this approach an underexplored question remains in any of these attempts of why it is that relative differences in education might matter for turnout. As Pattie and Johnston state:

'Showing that voting patterns are consistent with contextual effects is not the same as demonstrating that such effects operate. It is necessary to uncover the mechanisms by which these contextual effects bring their influence to bear.' (2000: 44).

According to Persson, by focusing on empirical tests of the relationships between individual and aggregate education, studies do 'not allow for direct examination of the causal mechanism' within the sorting model (2014: 726). Authors can only go so far in subsequent theoretical inferences without this. By studying the causal mechanisms behind the explanatory theory I have proposed, we can contrastingly strengthen any thoughts about relative education effects and investigate what is it about a lower level of education – and the falling level of socioeconomic and political status it is thought both to assign and engender as HE expands – that causes non-HE individuals to disengage from politics and abstain. I focus here on social positioning effects and, in the vein of Persson (2014), use cross-sectional data and path diagrams within an SEM approach.

My original framework argues that among non-voting young people there will be individuals who, due to their non-HE educational experiences, find themselves positioned in less politically engaged networks. As a consequence, they fail to develop a strong commitment to electoral participation. To represent the level of politicisation I create a latent variable which combines the two agreement scales detailed previously (Chapter 5) used to record levels of political discussion and the political interest of friends and family.⁵⁷ I again include the party supporter variable, assuming individuals

⁵⁷ Latent variable created by summing original responses (initially recoded between zero and one), and dividing by two, to give each component equal weighting.

excluded from political networks will also find it more difficult to identify with a party and thus face weaker mobilisation for electoral participation; they do not foresee themselves being committed to a party in the future so do not imagine they will vote. Additionally, with a lower than average educational status and possible perception of under-representation among formal political organisations following educational inflation, they might find partisan identification even more difficult. This could see a direct effect from education also arising.

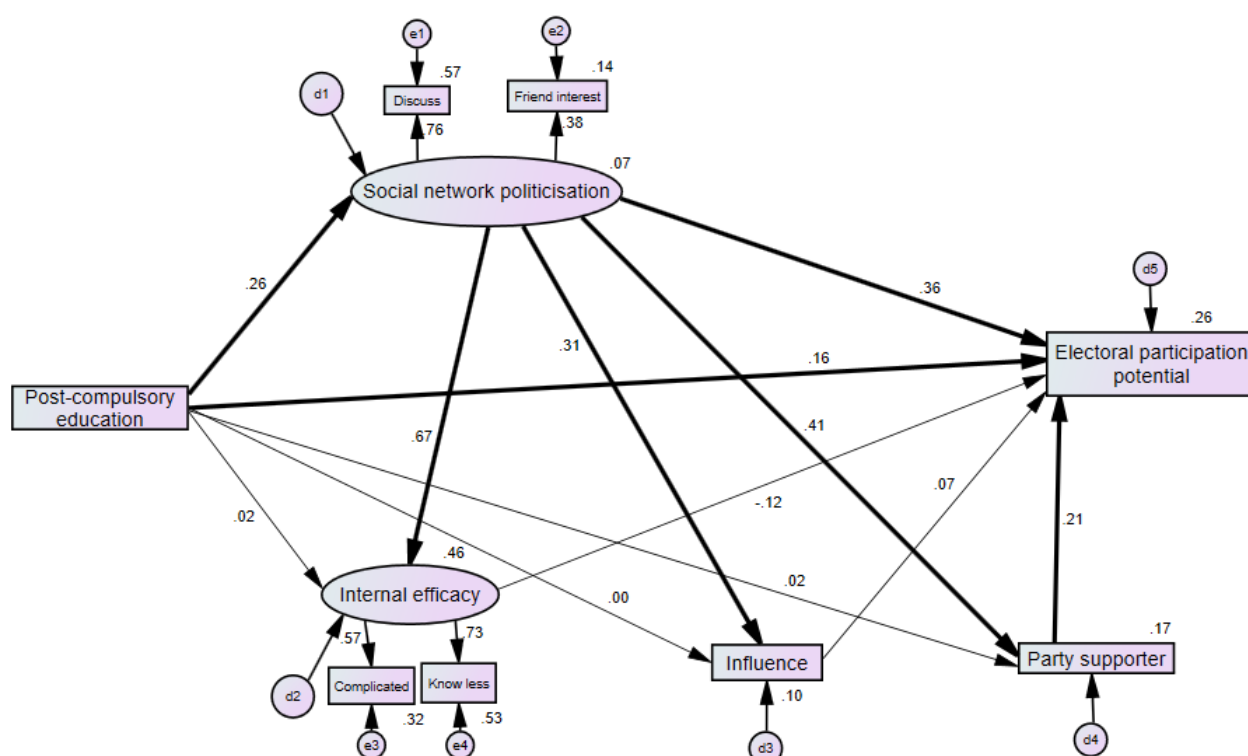
Figure 7.1 presents the final path diagram I have devised for this analysis, with the factor score for electoral participation potential created during the principal components analysis in Chapter 6 as the dependent variable. Disaffection variables provide additional controls. The final model emerges after a process of model testing and refinement. For instance, it uses statistical observations to assess model fit with the included paths originally conceived according to the theoretical foundations of the marginalised citizen outlined in Chapter 2. It should be noted that for absolute disaffection the model uses only perceived influence to represent external efficacy. As found in the earlier turnout regression (Table 5.4), influence proved to be the only significant indicator from the original three external efficacy variables. This provides a case for continuing to include it here in order to offer comparison with earlier analyses. Through the SEM itself the model fit improved with its inclusion (close to, RMSEA <.06, CFI >.95).⁵⁸ Moreover, the political influence indicator is that which is most closely linked to a classic external efficacy concept at the national level – ‘the feeling that individual political action does have [...] an impact upon the political process’ (Campbell et al 1954: 187) – suggesting for my purposes there is no significant loss of theoretical sophistication from choosing to include this on its own. In contrast, I choose to exclude the remaining external efficacy indicators from the final model since they revealed both insignificant paths and contributed to a worsening model fit. Nevertheless, as the model itself demonstrates, in contrast to the findings for turnout, even perceived political influence does not present as significant in determining electoral participation potential.

Political trust and responsiveness indicators were similarly not found to be significant within the SEM for the electoral participation factor score. As I refined the model,

⁵⁸ CFI (Comparative Fit Index) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) are the two most frequently reported and relied upon model fit statistics for SEM (Ullman 2007: 720).

including paths of a similar nature for these variables – where they are assumed to impact on electoral participation potential while themselves being impacted upon by education and social networks – were non-significant and contributed to poor model fit. Unlike for political influence, with no necessary or theoretically interesting comparison to be made with the regression of Table 5.4, I have excluded them also from the final model. Instead, we have seen that all young people appear to demonstrate fairly low trust and are disaffected in this respect. For trust alone, the vast majority of young people, irrespective of educational background and final electoral behaviour, can be classified as a disaffected citizenry.

Figure 7.1: SEM of post-compulsory education versus no post-compulsory education and future electoral participation factor among non-voters (standardised results)



Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI); Chi-square 243.592 (12 d.f.), $p < .001$, RMSEA = .060, CFI = .944; $n = 722$

In Figure 7.1, significant paths are depicted in bold and the standardised regression coefficients presented so as to compare relative effect sizes.⁵⁹ The ultimate predictor variable from which the model stems is dichotomous, dividing the non-voting sample

⁵⁹ As required by SEM, analysis conducted using unweighted data. However, as this is focused on non-voters only the youth turnout weight previously applied is unnecessary.

between those with and without post-compulsory education. This decision was based on the principal components analysis and LCA which implied it was here where variation in support for electoral participation was starkest. Throughout the model development I have also run the same path diagram with three more dichotomous education factors – (1) HE versus no HE, (2) student versus non-student, and (3) FE versus no FE. The post-compulsory education indicator comes forward as one of the most significant and useful in extending our understanding. The strength of the relationship between education and social networks is, for example, much weaker in the HE/no HE and FE/no FE dichotomies (standardised coefficients of .14 and .13, respectively) implying it is not here that the most important variation between young people emerges. Moreover, there is no noteworthy improvement in RMSEA or CFI statistics when using these. Nevertheless, in the case of a student dichotomy, while there are only marginal changes, the standardised coefficient between education and social networks is greater at .30 with small gains in model fit also reported (RMSEA=.058, CFI=.949). I return to this below.

With the post-compulsory schooling dummy, the model demonstrates that much of the impact of education on support for electoral participation occurs through social positioning. Having any form of post-compulsory education experience generates a .26 standard deviation increase in the likelihood of being located among politically engaged social networks. This then plays a leading role in increasing an individual's level of electoral participation potential, much more so than education itself. It is this which then appears to have the greatest direct effect on future electoral participation, a one-unit increase leading to a .36 standard deviation increase in the electoral participation factor score. This supports a view that networks determine levels of political awareness and engagement (Quintelier et al 2012; McClurg 2003; Verba et al 1995; Shulman and Levine 2012). The more politicised an individuals' networks, the more likely they also are to be a party supporter which similarly goes on to make them more positive towards the prospect of voting, even if to a lesser extent than a generalised political interest variable. The importance of social positioning in shaping the political character of non-voting young people is further demonstrated with it being the networks in which an individual is located which impacts on the disaffection component attitudes included in the final model, not education itself. Internal and external efficacy are not significantly associated with electoral participation potential, implying disaffection attitudes may be fairly similar across non-voting young people. It nevertheless supports my claims that social

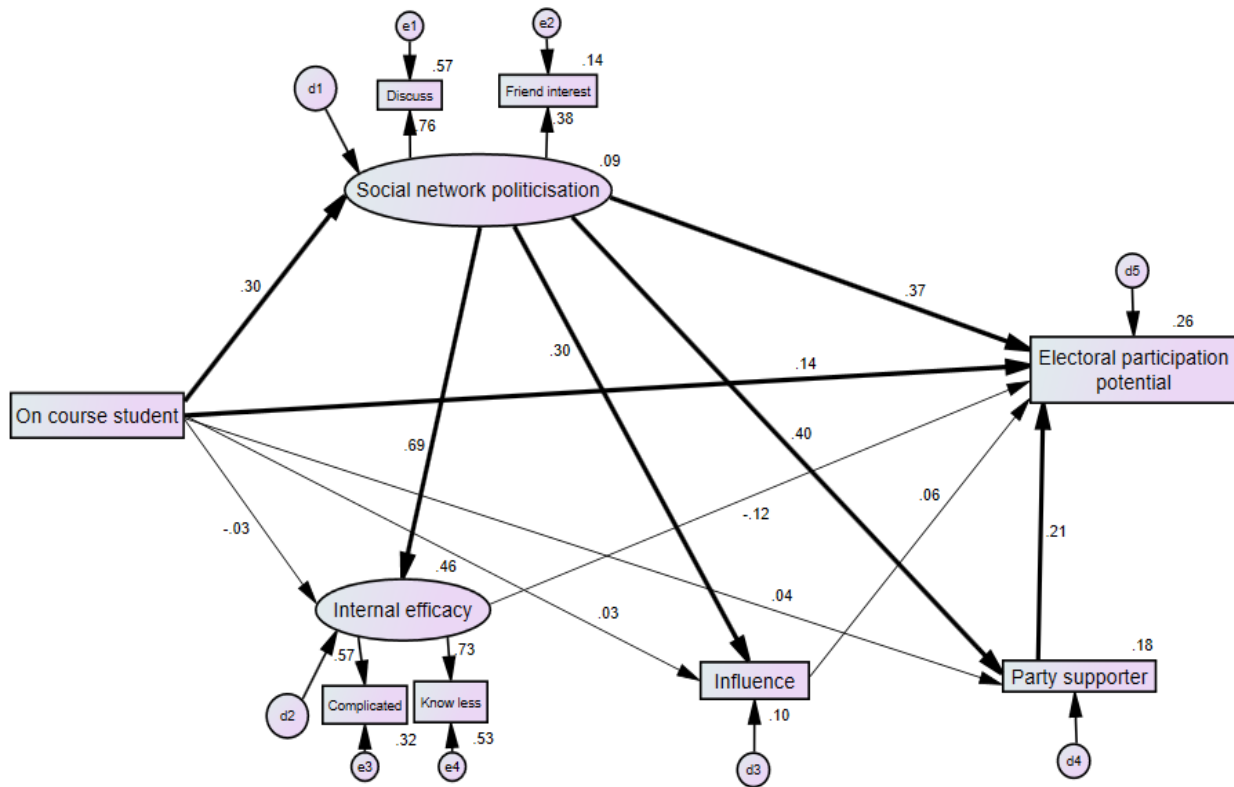
positioning is more important for determining levels of political confidence and perceived influence than education itself.

These findings have significant implications for understanding educational mechanisms relevant to this thesis. Education is still important for developing a commitment to voting. On its own, extending one's education beyond a compulsory level leads to a .16 standard deviation increase in the electoral participation factor score. Thus there remains reason for applying an absolute education theory within any explanation, although from these tests it is unclear as to what causes this since education on its own does not increase political interest, partisanship, or internal efficacy (indicative of civic skills and knowledge). Much of its impact (standardised total effect .26) occurs through its determining the socio-political nature of individuals' networks, the extent to which they are able to discuss politics and are located in friendship groups where there is a collective interest in politics. This network environment does have the greatest standardised total effect of all variables in the model (.39). It can subsequently be suggested that young people today who are outwith FE and HE 'lose out' on electoral mobilisation, motivation, and encouragement. There is support for *H3* and a further nuance that the distinction is not related only to HE experience but having any post-compulsory education.

In turn, there is increased reason for presenting these disengaged young people as marginalised and for applying ideas of social positioning effects to explain their abstention. They do not vote since they do not perceive themselves as electoral participators. They do not see themselves as electoral participators because their educational experiences have limited their interaction with politically engaged individuals and as a consequence, they have been unable to develop an interest in and awareness of politics. Similarly, they cannot build a commitment to a party which would otherwise compel them to vote. *H4* therefore also receives some partial support with network positioning affecting political interest which goes on to impact turnout. However, while the level of politicisation to which young people are subject through their network interactions is significant for their internal efficacy and perceived influence, the causal paths end here. Neither of these disaffection-related attitude areas is a significant promoter or discourager of electoral participation. While these issues may be important for actual turnout, as seen previously, they do not impact as heavily on approaches to participation. Therefore, raising standards at a compulsory educational

level would appear incapable of reducing participation inequalities; average levels of education can be altered but where social hierarchies persist and determine and groups are excluded, there will be young people who continue to lack the necessary motivation and mobilisation to vote.

Figure 7.2: SEM of students versus non-students and future electoral participation factor among non-voters (standardised results)



Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI); Chi-square 241.109 (12 d.f.), $p < .001$, RMSEA = .058, CFI = .949; $n = 722$

As alluded to, however, there is a further element to the story which can be observed in a path diagram which uses on course student status as its starting point (Figure 7.2). For the most part, there is little change in coefficients – in effect size, direction, and significance – yet a student advantage appears. Individuals currently in an educational institution see the politicisation of their social networks being .30 standard deviations higher than for those young people located outwith an educational environment, a group which includes graduates. This suggests that simply being in an educational environment can be politicising (Tenn 2007; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980) and also implies that being a student does not necessarily have to mean a decline in support for electoral participation in the mould of repertoire replacement. Even if they are non-voting (Table

7.1), being a student seems to raise interest in voting through the networks it provides individuals with access to. Therefore, while I have chosen to focus first on presenting the results of the post-compulsory education test, in line with the relative education theory and marginalised citizen of my framework, it is also arguable that the impact of education via social positioning is strongest among young people when sustained by continued interactions. This is something the university or college setting can provide. Graduates may have contacts in influential positions but the extent to which these continue to be politicising in the immediate years following graduation seems weaker (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 57). *H3* might therefore be extended to suggest on-course student status, HE and FE, is most important in promoting electoral activity.

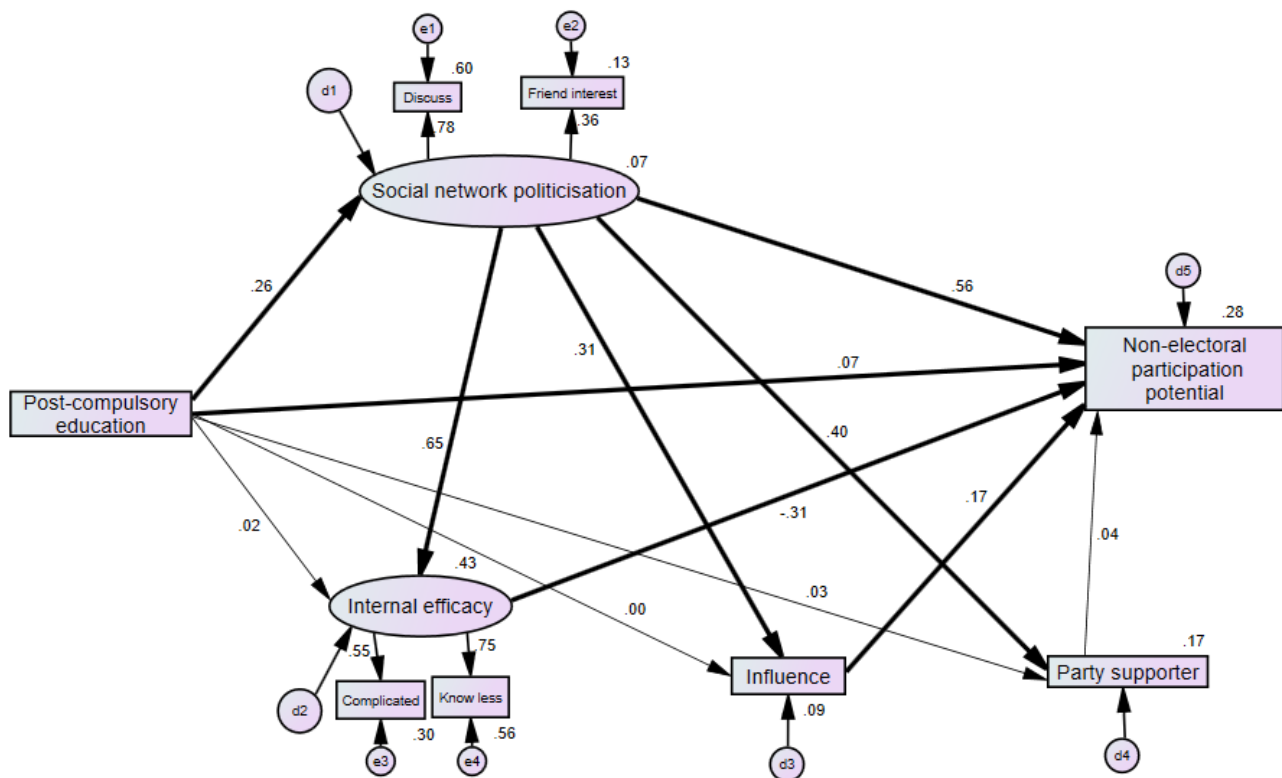
7.3. The activist youth

The final area to which the non-voting disaffected citizenry typology directs us, relevant to the participation puzzle and investigation of varied education effects, concerns young people's interest in an alternative repertoire of political activity. As is consistently shown throughout this thesis, to claim young people abstain because they have replaced voting with alternative participation preferences appears unfounded. There is no evidence to suggest young people are rejecting voting as a result of becoming activists. Moreover, in many ways the characteristics of the young non-voters in classes 4 and 5 of the CITS LCA (those who could be considered more activist and omnivorous *due to their not prioritising elections*) are linked to their electoral participation potential. Both can be defined by either scoring high or low on the associated factor score. In the case of the more indifferent 'activists' of class 4, I would assume their non-voting is related to their low voting potential with their support for alternative participation only actually reaching a score higher than .5 on attending a rally. This is unlikely to be driving abstention. They do not prioritise voting but in their alternative participation potential they are not overly activist in approach either. For class 5, while they are interested in alternative activities, they also remain almost equally committed to voting. This implies they were simply not mobilised in 2010, as with the frustrated elector classes.

Final investigations should nonetheless be made into possible reasons why it is typically among on-course students that support for alternative activities is highest, seen in classes 3, 4, and 5. To do so I repeat the SEM of electoral participation using the student versus non-student dichotomy but with the non-electoral participation potential factor

score from Chapter 6 for my dependent variable. I have kept the rest of the path diagram the same, looking to capture the effect of these additional factors. For instance, can political networks in themselves present encouragement? The resultant model is presented in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: SEM of student versus non-student and future alternative participation factor among non-voters (standardised results)



Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI); Chi-square 238.321 (12 d.f.), $p < .001$, RMSEA = .055, CFI = .953; $n = 722$

There are a number of similarities with Figures 7.1 and 7.2 while there has been further improvement in model fit statistics (RMSEA $< .06$, CFI $> .95$) suggesting many of these factors are as important – if not more so – for alternative participation as for electoral. Notably, the level of politicisation within young people’s social networks, as determined by their education, appears most influential on alternative participation potential. Being an on-course student increases the likelihood of being surrounded by and aware of politically engaged individuals which in turn increases internal and external efficacy, and partisanship. These networks also have a large direct impact on levels of support for alternative participation potential. A standardised coefficient of .56, the greatest of all direct effects, suggests we might view students’ increased willingness for action as being

in large part due to their social networks. This supports work by Crossley (2008), Van Dyke (1998), and Shulman and Levine (2012), as well as wider thoughts about recruitment by Verba et al (1995). These present social connections themselves as opening up opportunities for action in which optimism on their effectiveness and appeal can grow. Equally, it builds on Hensby's explorations that where such connections are lacking, the likelihood of interest being converted into action is much weaker, even among student groups. Supportive networks are required to overcome reservations and build knowledge (2015).

Internal and external efficacy indicator variables also now have a significant impact while partisanship is no longer key areas of variation. External efficacy increases alternative participation potential, implying an interest in alternative activities is not necessarily prompted by frustration concerning political institutions' openness. Rather individuals are more willing to pursue these routes when they believe they can exert influence. Interestingly, internal efficacy is negatively associated with alternative participation potential. Ordinarily and within the framework and literature presented, interest in political activity of any nature is expected to increase when individuals are confident in their own political skills. Instead, suggestions are that these forms of activity might be particularly attractive to individuals who feel incapable of engaging with formal politics. Alternative participation is perhaps viewed as more accessible through its informality while internally efficacious individuals have more confidence in electoral abilities.

Meanwhile, I have tested this model including a variable representing the amount of free time an individual believes they enjoy outside work, education, and life commitments.⁶⁰ This would reflect the notion of students being 'structurally "freed up" for activism' (Crossley 2008: 32), students potentially believing they have more free time which can leave them able to pursue political activities outwith elections. However, when doing so there was little impact, none of which was significant, and overall model fit suffered. With limited variable options within the dataset to operationalise participation opportunities, these conclusions can only be tentative at this stage, and yet from that analysis any opportunities students do enjoy appear unrelated to a sense of freedom and more to the connections they make and sustain when at university or college. *H6* therefore receives

⁶⁰ Four-point scale coded between 0 and 1 from 'none' to 'a lot'.

only partial support. Young people at universities do appear to benefit from network-based opportunities but do not report additional freedom for participation, nor do they have more negative views of formal politics.

7.4. Education in youth and non-voting behaviour

In this chapter I have delved deeper into reasons why different groups of young people are abstaining at elections and the roles education might be playing in this. As detailed previously, non-voters in the youth electorate – represented by the CITS respondents – can be variously categorised into a five-class or three-theme typology. For the purposes of comparing reasons for abstention, however, there ultimately appear to be two key groups in the sample: those who support voting but have been deterred from turning out and those who reject voting in its entirety. It has been my aim to consider the mechanisms, linked to education, which can explain the emergence of these two groups.

For the former, a lack of partisanship in particular can present itself as an obstacle to turning out, young people here perhaps frustrated by the inability to identify a party which represents them and/or their views. Rational choice ideas of supply-and-demand, and issue-based voting theories (Hay 2007; Downs 1957; McDonald and Budge 2005: 61; see also Hustinx et al 2012; Dermody et al 2010) appear to some extent supported. Individuals are often in favour of voting – education seemingly still promoting political interest and commitment, albeit predominantly through social networks, as seen in Figures 7.1 and 7.2 – but without a party to vote for, they abstain. It is an expression of individual agency. The changes within education and society more generally have perhaps therefore fostered this approach to electoral choice. Despite support for alternative participation being higher among more educated sectors of the youth population, however, there is little support for arguing that educational expansion has promoted alternative participation repertoires to such an extent that voting has been replaced. Instead, we see interest in alternative participation typically mirroring that of electoral participation potential, with on course students being more inclined to participate. This is particularly in response to their positioning within politicised networks where opportunities for discussion and participation seem to emerge.

For the non-voters who do not believe they will ever vote, social networks come forward as the key mechanism through which education is affecting their approach to political

participation. Individuals who experience post-compulsory education, especially those currently studying, are positioned within more politicised social networks which in turn raise their interest in politics, their partisanship, and efficacy. Logic typically applied within the sorting model or relative education hypothesis (Nie et al 1996) therefore appears applicable. Even if young people are staying in school longer than ever before, if they do not have the opportunity to mix with politically engaged individuals they will fail to develop an interest in voting and seemingly not experience direct mobilisation for any form of political participation. Interestingly, this pattern has not been evidenced in the CITS as being able to distinguish between FE and HE or between undergraduates and postgraduates. This suggests an educational status divide –based on the type or level within the student population – does not currently exist. The important feature appears to be individuals being in education during their formative voting years.

In the final chapter which now follows, I combine these findings with those of Chapters 5 and 6 to consider in more detail their implications for understanding the youth participation puzzle. I also look at ways in which the work so far might be developed in the future and additional components which could be applied within my framework to build its explanatory power further.

8. Conclusion: implications and applications of the disaffected citizenry framework

This thesis has presented and tested a new disaffected citizenry framework designed to explain young people's continued non-voting behaviour. My central proposition was that educational expansion has failed to boost voter turnout because more educated electorates possess increased tendencies towards disaffection and the adoption of more selective, less duty-bound notions of electoral participation. The empirical study, focused on the case of British electors, offers mixed support. Certainly, disaffection is present within the British electorate and among young people, as measured by a range of indicators concerned with both absolute and relative judgements. On the foundational assumptions, however, there is limited evidence to suggest negativity towards formal politics has increased or that critical views are more common among young people. In this initial respect, there is little suggestion of generational change. A lack of consistent over-time data, however, capturing a range of attitudes, has undoubtedly restricted more thorough examination of trends. Future surveys would be advised to pay more attention to collection of this kind of data. The British Election Study (BES), for example, while always pursuing survey instrument improvement should endeavour to ensure more reliable and standardised measurement of attitudinal data across its changing research teams. Future research would then be better able to track aggregate disaffection rates and provide greater context. More research could also be done to test the equivalence of the existing attitudinal indicators and their degree of comparability.

Nevertheless, suggestions here are that the expansion of education and simultaneous falls in turnout have not been matched by a clear concurrent increase in disaffection. The British electorate today are not noticeably more disaffected than in the past. An explanatory framework cannot be built on issues of attitude prevalence alone. Instead, in support of *H1*, the disaffected citizenry framework should focus on *attitude impact*. Crucially, young people – members of a more educated generation – are found to be more affected by disaffection attitudes when making their turnout decision than other, older electors.

Where perceived political responsiveness is low, indicative of scepticism of politicians' ability to be representative and deliver on policy promises, British young people appear

less likely to have voted in the 2010 UK general election. Similarly, where their internal efficacy is low, suggestive of a lack of political confidence, they withheld their vote. While this latter element first presents as an issue of the individual and their own abilities, there is arguably an implicit judgement on the political system within the responses. If knowledge and skill are deemed necessary conditions of participation to the extent that electors actually abstain when they believe it is lacking, it suggests politics is viewed as being only accessible to an elite and capable constituency. In stark contrast, older electors reported opposite behaviours. They are least likely to vote when their ideals for representative democracy and external efficacy are low. If they possess high democratic principles and think citizen involvement can influence political outcomes they will vote, even if their opinions regarding responsiveness and their own capacity are pessimistic. The findings also point towards young people affording views associated with political disaffection a more prominent position in their political character. In their approach to participation, they are more likely to pay attention to these issues. For older electors, the presumed negative impact of such attitudes is seemingly mitigated by other factors and concerns. As successive British Social Attitudes reports have found, the proportion of electors believing they have a duty to vote has fallen; in 2014 only 57 per cent contrasted with 76 per cent in 1987 (Simpson and Phillips 2015). Young people's abstention can be connected to disaffection in a way which is not true for other electors.

Further analysis suggests young people are also less likely to report participation repertoires in which voting is likely and/or highly prioritised, offering support for *H2* and its component parts. In the samples, they favour to a greater extent either withdrawal from politics – reporting little interest in any form of participation – or a more wide-ranging approach in which voting, even if supported, enjoys a less dominant position when judged against non-electoral activities. Repertoire replacement is not evident, however. This implies low turnout stems more from adopting a less deferential, more monitorial approach as opposed to a zero-sum participation trade-off in which it actively loses out. Not all young people have rejected it. We nevertheless see young people today seeming more distinct in their not being as guaranteed electoral participators as seems true of older constituencies.

Evidently, as with the over-time trend assessments, data limitations leave some avenues under-explored here. For instance, life-cycle effects would be expected to play some role in determining an individual's approach to political participation. Disaffection might, in

part, exert greater influence on voting behaviour among young people in the absence of a developed electoral habits. Similarly, with fewer political experiences, the freedom provided by youth, and questions about elections' immediate relevance, any preference for non-voting repertoires may be a short-term phenomenon. Consequently, alongside greater over-time survey consistency, a further recommendation emerging is for more panel-based survey research on these issues in order to differentiate between life-cycle and generational effects. Nonetheless, with changes witnessed in actual electoral participation – downward trends and growing gap between old and young voters – there remains reason for believing this can be related to disaffection's growing impact on young people's political behaviour. Equally, the changing emphasis of education towards the pursuit of self-actualisation and agency-promoting teaching (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Shor 1992; Carr 1995) – as well as simply the higher aggregate attainment levels – would suggest there is greater potential for this effect to be operating today. From my research I therefore argue that young people's electoral participation can be usefully understood as their being a *non-voting disaffected citizenry*. Rather than being puzzling participants, their educational experiences are encouraging them to engage in and with politics in new ways. Increasingly, their political characters are ones in which perceptions of politics and of themselves play a much greater role in determining their behaviours with voting no longer being an unchallenged norm driven by obligation.

My results also offer support for a typology of non-voting young people to incorporate and describe the heterogeneous nature of the youth electorate. Over-time analysis using the BES suggests both higher education (HE) and non-HE respondents can report disaffection and yet vote at different rates. Equally, we find abstainers in both groups, suggesting a contribution from each. While most report disaffection with politics – their scores in both the British Participation Survey (BPS) and Citizens in Transition Survey (CITS) rarely positive – the reasons for this and their subsequent responses vary. On the one hand, there appears to be a group which is marginalised, frequently found outside post-compulsory education while being especially lacking in internal efficacy and appearing to see little value in political participation of any form. On the other, is a frustrated group in which individuals demonstrate a desire to participate yet seemingly little motivation to do so on polling day. Both have reasons for abstention but these manifest as distinct phenomena. To refine my initial framework and build its contribution, these findings – of variation among young people and on the mechanisms responsible – point towards a two-stage mobilisation thesis.

8.1. Mobilisation: a two-stage process

In my original proposal I spoke of a non-voting disaffected citizenry, a growing constituency of young people who abstain because they are critical of politics and pay more attention to this criticism when deciding if and how to vote. Simultaneously, however, I acknowledged that not all young people are abstainers. Even if no longer the norm, a not insignificant proportion of 18-24 year olds continue to vote in the UK – 44 per cent in 2010 (on which the analysis has centred) and 43 per cent in 2015 (Ipsos-MORI 2010, 2015). I referred to these individuals as mobilised voters. Following my testing of the proposed educational experience mechanisms which underpin the proposed disaffected citizenry framework, this label ('mobilised') appears highly appropriate. It also makes a contribution to improving our understanding of why some young people abstain while others vote, and the ways in which educational experiences encourage these outcomes. There can be additional refinement of my thesis and its application of two-dimensions of disaffection – dissatisfied and alienated - to explanations within the youth participation puzzle. Moreover, doing so has potential for wider impact by identifying reasons for different young people's abstention and the areas in which policies and engagement strategies could be focused to boost turnout rates.

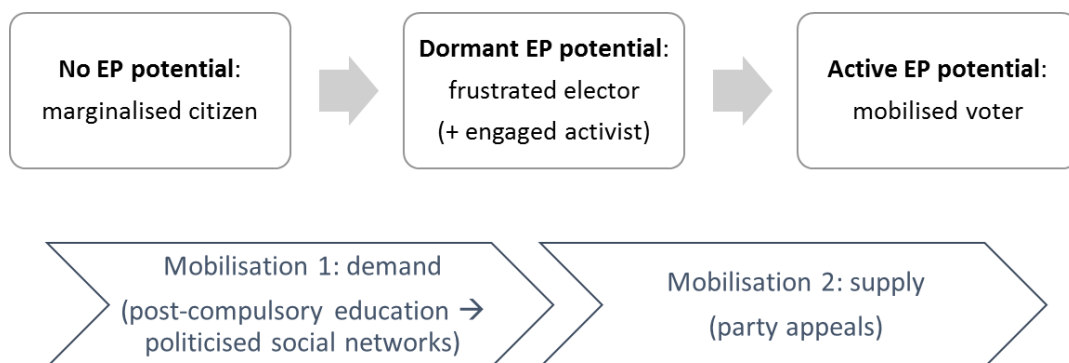


Figure 8.1: The two-stage mobilisation thesis of electoral participation (EP)

Figure 8.1 offers visual representation of this two-stage mobilisation process. It sees an individual move from a base position of disengagement and possible alienation in which there is little commitment to voting, to one of political engagement and interest (and a commitment to future voting), to one of active electoral participation. These correspond

with the marginalised citizen, frustrated elector (and to a lesser extent, engaged activist), and mobilised voter. They come about through an initial 'demand-mobilisation' and a later 'supply-mobilisation'.

8.1.1. Mobilisation: demand

The examination of *H3* and *H4* has suggested that a first stage in becoming electorally active is acquiring a commitment to the act of voting. This can create the demand or desire for participation. Without this, individuals would lack the motivation to engage in an election, follow the campaign, and seek out a party or candidate to vote for. My analysis suggests this demand is principally developed through an individual's interaction with politicised social networks in which friends and family express an interest in the political world and present opportunities for political discussion. This can increase engagement with political issues, build political confidence, and help in identifying partisan attachment (McClurg 2003; Quintelier et al 2005). Such network interactions, however, appear heavily dependent on educational experiences. Pursuing post-compulsory education and being situated in an educational institution boost the likelihood of reporting politicised networks. As Shulman and Levine (2012) have demonstrated, college campuses support the reproduction of political norms, while Beaumont (2010: 547-8) highlights the importance of educational institutions for building a political community through which social encouragement of participation is possible. Therefore, while today's young people might be more educated than ever before, if they are outwith the educational system when first encountering a general election, we can expect an under-developed interest in participating and hence almost inevitable abstention. They become alienated in response to social and political marginalisation.

It is consequently not enough to rely on increasing attainment levels or even citizenship education to encourage an electorally active youth where it is not accompanied by active social reinforcement and recruitment. This is not a wholly new idea and as I introduce in Chapter 1, social networks have historically been considered an important force in political socialisation (McClurg 2003; Verba et al 1995; Quintelier et al 2012; Huckfeldt et al 2005: 21; Putnam 2000). There is also support in this view for the logic of social network centrality featuring in Nie et al's sorting model (1996). My analysis, however, suggests further that in Britain education is failing to boost turnout where it is incapable

of overcoming social and political exclusion which would otherwise introduce young people to politics. With the decline of alternative mobilising agents – including the family and trade unions – which have traditionally socialised young people politically and irrespective of educational status (see Flanagan et al 2012), it is unsurprising that the proportion of non-student young people voting has not simply remained constant but been falling. Being out of education upon entering the electorate, they are at a disadvantage and yet without support from other agencies, there is an even weaker likelihood of their developing or sustaining a commitment to future electoral participation.

On the surface, this presents a disheartening picture in which little can be done to mobilise this increasingly marginalised group. In its purest form, a sorting model centred on relative education would claim a hierarchy of political access will always exist, the goalposts simply moving as education levels rise. However, in electoral participation this zero-sum scenario is not unavoidable. Voting is, after all, an act in which access to participation is not in limited supply. Unlike for resource-dependent activities or sustained contact with policy makers, one individual voting does not prohibit another from turning out. Rather, this study suggests current trends could be stymied or even reversed if more young people are able to experience greater network encouragement of electoral participation when becoming eligible electors. As a universal right both in the UK and in other Western democracies, education is perhaps one of the remaining areas in which this mobilisation can occur; it is accessible for all young people up to a certain age and could expand further. As I return to below, if it is a case of mobilisation through social interactions, there are strategies which might be considered – notably a lower voting age – which could begin to minimise the impact of varied post-compulsory educational experiences.

8.1.2. Mobilisation: supply

The second stage in mobilising young people to vote requires channelling of electoral and political interest into actual participation. The analysis here has suggested this can be aided by the actions of political parties (*H5*); work using the CITS suggests significant difference between pro-voting voters and pro-voting abstainers is the former's party supporter status. This is also reflected in the earlier findings related to perceived political responsiveness in the BPS where there is a suggestion of the importance of parties

presenting themselves as trustworthy and representative actors. As Hay states, commitment to the principle of voting is only one part of the equation. Individuals need to believe they have something to vote for. This can include identifying a party worthy of support (2007: 60). Such a view contains elements of an issue-based voting theory and presentation of electors as consumers, seeking policy platforms which serve their personal and/or social interests (Himmelweit et al 1985). It argues that turnout becomes less likely for young people when there is no viable and attractive party. Even if interested in voting, many refrain from doing so if it requires party and policy compromises. As Dalton (2008a) and Norris (2011) suggest, with gains in education young people can demonstrate greater criticism and demand higher standards of performance and representation. When thinking about possible obstacles to turnout, the lack of partisan identification among non-voting pro-voting young people could lead us to study party behaviours. Leading political parties seem to be unsuccessfully attracting young people. This might be due to unappealing manifesto promises or more broadly an image problem associated with politicians and the formal organisational structures within which they act. Manifesto and campaign analysis – including studies of content and style alongside electors' direct responses – would be a useful next step to enhance the explanatory model presented in this thesis.

Either way, for the puzzle of participation it implies that while educational expansion can succeed in encouraging electoral participation among many young people – as components of both civic education and sorting model hypotheses would posit – it cannot guarantee participation if there remains disaffection with the party system and its offers. There remains evidence of the change Dalton presents regarding a move from citizen duty to engaged citizenship (2008a). Even if interested in voting, young people will not enter into elections unquestioningly. In an era in which younger generations are demonstrating a less deferential approach, parties therefore need to recognise their role in mobilisation.

8.1.3. Meanings behind the mechanisms

In this thesis I have created a framework through which young people's electoral participation might be understood which takes account of different mechanisms of mobilisation, linked to educational experience. Alongside further testing and refinement of the statistical models across contexts (see below), future research might be developed

through a 'rhetorical logic' mixed methods design (Mason 2006: 36-7). Qualitative techniques can be used to attach greater meaning to the identified mechanisms by exploring how young people themselves interpret these relationships. They provide in-depth illustrations of individual and group experiences. Focus groups, for example, which bring together young people of specified educational experiences might provide further understanding of the nature of network politicisation and how this goes on to impact behaviours. An advantage over interviews for addressing this question is that focus groups not only collect content-based data. The interactions between participants and data generation processes themselves can also be studied (Hydén and Bülow 2003: 319; Kitzinger and Barbour 1999: 5). This could be particularly insightful in demonstrating the ways in which young people of different educational standing discuss politics and within their networks – and among peers of similar experience – their attitudes and approaches to politics develop. Moreover, this synergistic effect (see Stewart et al 2007: 43) means new mechanism avenues for research may arise through the participants' discussions which have not yet been examined.

8.2. Youth activism?

A key finding in this research has been the notable absence of the proposed engaged activist, linked to *H6*. Despite high profile instances of youth activism globally, particularly during the financial crisis from 2008/9 onwards (see Sloam 2013), young people in Britain today do not display a particular preference for alternative forms of political participation – either versus older age groups, or versus any priority afforded to electoral participation. This appears true of both HE and non-HE young people. Therefore, unlike for Norris (2002, 2003) and Dalton (2008), there is little reason here to believe that as young people become more educated they substitute voting with other forms of participation. From making use of 'willingness to participate' responses, the analysis also suggests this reflects an attitude and approach, rather than only being the result of opportunities or triggers not having arisen. In cases where they are demonstrating interest in a broad range of activities – typically among on-course students – it is not at voting's expense, while only a small minority appear to be regularly involved in intensive political action. It may be that many young people, even with campus activities and citizenship initiatives, remain fairly unaware of all the political options open to them, while it is perhaps misplaced to think these will have an instant appeal when judged against other social activities. In a period of economic instability,

education and employment pressures may also detract from pursuing a more activist lifestyle in which political activity dominates, or at least enjoys significant attention.

Whatever the reason, it has important implications for democracy and the way in which we view the youth participation puzzle. We cannot simply assume that where young people do not vote, they are still having a say and exerting influence through alternative forms of engagement. Whether this amounts to a crisis is a subjective judgement. However, we must not be complacent and reject any concerns. With a lack of alternative participation in evidence, young people's low turnout arguably threatens Britain's democratic principles by undermining their representation in political decision-making. Thus, this thesis makes a further contribution by demonstrating that if groups or organisations want to ensure ongoing youth representation, more efforts are likely to be needed to engage and mobilise this constituency. Very few who are abstaining are having their voice heard through alternative channels.

8.3. A case for 'votes at 16'?

The results regarding social networks and the importance of being around politically engaged individuals when entering the electorate – so as to develop an initial interest in electoral participation – suggest one solution might be to raise the leaving age for post-compulsory schooling. This would see young people entering the electorate while still in education. More radically, HE might be made a mandatory experience but this is unlikely to secure support. It would be both costly and overtly prioritise academic studies above vocational courses. An alternative approach surrounds extending the franchise. This is a highly topical issue in the UK, where the voting age was lowered for the referendum on Scottish independence in 2014 (and for upcoming 2016 Scottish Parliament elections) and has been discussed for the future referendum on EU membership. Academics too have added their voice. For example, in the 2014 Political Studies Association report 'Beyond the Youth Citizenship Commission', Berry proposes a referendum on whether to lower the voting age to include 16 and 17 year olds as a way of engaging these individuals in the political process (2014b: 16).

Arguments in favour frequently rest upon the age of responsibility and moral concerns regarding who should have a say in choosing legislative representatives (see Cowley and

Denver 2004: 59-60). If young people can join the army and get married at 16 (albeit with parental consent) or be paying income tax, one view is that they have a social right to participate in elections to have a say in how the country is run (Folkes 2004). Given the age of responsibility varies considerably, however, and in many cases across Britain has been rising – such as for purchasing cigarettes and leaving school – this argument can fall down (Cowley and Denver 2004: 59-60; Russell 2014). The age at which an individual is deemed capable and eligible to participate will almost always be an arbitrary choice while life experiences, ability, and maturity are subjectively assessed, varying from individual to individual.

From the work in this thesis, however, thoughts of social network mobilisation in particular suggest that lowering the voting age could have the potential overcome the negative impact associated with not pursuing post-compulsory education. The analysis suggests non-student status restricts the level of politicisation within a young person's social networks and leaves them more disinclined to the act of voting even if they are degree-holders. There are limited opportunities for encountering direct recruitment or for developing a sustained interest in participation. By lowering the voting age, these young people would enter the electorate when they can still access some form of political discussion and persuasion as provided by an educational environment (see Franklin 2004). In turn, this might boost their voting potential more so than the assumption of adult roles which, in many cases, will not necessarily provide opportunities for political debate (Highton and Wolfinger 2001). Once the habit is established, their future turnout is more likely.

Research here is relatively limited by the small number of cases where the voting age has been lowered to 16. Published studies tend to focus only on the Austrian case where the franchise was extended in 2007, dating back far enough to enable examination of multiple elections. They nevertheless find turnout and turnout potential can often be higher among 16 and 17 year olds than among 18-21 year olds (Wagner et al 2012; Zeglovits and Aichholzer 2014). The authors suggest this results from the stability associated with the younger group – for example, often living at home, not yet embarking on careers – and, significantly, their still being in education. Social forces beyond education, including family and friends, may still advantage some young people above others. However, by being located in an environment with its potential for political stimulation (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 57), young people who would ordinarily

miss out on this socialisation will have more opportunities for encountering politics. It might be thought that these opportunities are limited to HE environments and older students where campus activities and academic freedom provide the space for political networks to thrive (see Crossley 2008; Crossley and Ibrahim 2012). If a lower voting age, however, is combined with effective civics and citizenship education, there might be a further boost to political interest among school pupils (Zeglovits and Zandonella 2013; Zeglovits and Aichholzer 2014; see also Whiteley 2014). While this involves more formal teaching in contrast to informal interactions, it can still work towards engaging young people through political discussion.

Arguably, such a strategy will not be a panacea. Some young people will still not experience their first general election for Westminster while they are in education (Cowley and Denver 2004: 59). This could mean insufficient mobilisation, given my analysis suggests young people are most likely to be supportive of elections if they are currently in education. Nonetheless, elections of some form are held almost every year in Britain and it will be rare for a constituency to experience no election in which there can be encouragement to vote. General elections will likely generate the most interest but as the referendum on Scottish independence demonstrated, if efforts are made to bring an election into the classroom, interest in participating can be positively affected (McLaverly et al 2015: 21-2). Additional obstacles, such as registration, might also be overcome if related activities are conducted in schools, with such initiatives further raising electoral interest (Mycock and Tonge 2014: 12).

A related argument concerns the second mobilisation process. If 16 and 17 year olds become electors there is an increase in the youth electorate. Turnout may initially remain lower than for older electors but there is increased impetus for vote-seeking parties to develop a stronger youth appeal. They comprise a larger number of potential supporters.

Importantly, this thesis is not an advocacy of 'votes at 16'. As stated, research on its likely impact – and the conditions required to ensure its success – is still limited and draws principally only on the Austrian case. From the analysis conducted here, it also cannot be claimed that all barriers to young people's electoral engagement – particularly those for non-students – can be removed. Will the mobilisation experienced by HE and FE young people aged 18-24 following completion of post-compulsory education operate in the same way for younger individuals who are still in school? There are simply

indications here that lowering the voting age may provide opportunities to boost young people's turnout potential by increasing their likely network and party mobilisation. Consequently, there is a case for its further consideration. Research examining the 16 and 17 vote in the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections (and that of 18 and 19 year olds eligible to have voted in the 2014 referendum) will present a next stage in testing its impact within a British context.

8.4. Wider applications

The analysis and discussions so far have focused predominantly on the case of British electors. The (youth) participation puzzle is not, however, unique to Britain. As presented in Chapter 1, turnout among young people is consistently lower than average electorate – seen throughout Europe (Fieldhouse et al 2007) – while HE attendance has been simultaneously growing in many of these countries (Schofer and Meyer 2005). Even if educational variation in turnout is not always as significant as in the British case (see Gallego 2015: 24-6), expectations concerning its turnout-raising potential remain dominant throughout the literature. Furthermore, the disaffected citizenry framework proposed in Chapter 2 stems from research which extends beyond Britain. For example, key literature on the critical citizen has been studied from a cross-national perspective (Norris 2011). The sorting model, first introduced in America (Nie et al 1996), has since been supported by a study spanning 37 democracies (Persson 2013). Meanwhile, work on changing citizenship preferences has also adopted cross-national comparative designs (Inglehart 2008; Martin 2012b; Dalton 2004; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Having taken inspiration from this scholarship, there is much reason to believe the findings of this thesis can be more widely applied and so extent its contribution. Moreover, viewed within the context of more general rational choice and sociological approaches, there are commonalities with wider ideas about human behaviour. For example, the influence of social networks and the impact of cost-and-benefit calculations.

Clearly, results from the analysis of a single country case study cannot be unquestioningly applied to other contexts. Turnout itself is likely to be affected by numerous practical, proximate considerations which tend to exert their influence once other processes have taken effect (see Campbell et al 1960). For example, the day on which elections are held, polling station opening hours, methods of voting, and registration restrictions. These conditions affect the cost-benefit calculations of turning

out and the point at which an individual must decide whether and how to participate. Where voting is made easier, turnout is expected to be higher. For example, research from America, where election-day registration is an option in some but not all states, suggests that where it is in operation, turnout rates among young people significantly improve (Knack and White 2000). They can wait until campaigns have finished to decide whether or not to register and take part (Highton 2004: 509). Similarly, evidence from European Parliament elections suggests that if polling falls during the working week, turnout can be 10 percentage points lower than when elections are held over weekends (Mattila 2003: 463). The cost of taking time off work to travel to a specified polling station can create an obstacle.

Such factors will inevitably contribute to some turnout variation across countries. Importantly, however, these would not be expected to influence attitudes towards politics or commitment to the principle of electoral participation. They are attached to the voting act itself. Contrastingly, institutional conditions relating to the electoral and party system might have more impact. Proportional voting, for example, can boost turnout often because of the perceived potential for fairness in representation (see Blais and Carty 1990: 179). It may also see smaller parties coming forward as influential coalition partners. Relevant to the mobilisation thesis above, this could encourage stronger partisan identification by raising the number of feasible parties from which electors can choose (Karp and Banducci 2008: 331). Parties have fewer incentives to adopt a catch-all approach so can appeal to more specific group interests while voters may feel less compromised as choice expands. The median-voter theory of Downs, for example, is focused on a two-party system (1957). This scenario has dominated post-war elections in Britain, only shifting in recent years, and is seen in the US. For many European countries, however, more proportional and multi-party systems are the norm. I would expect young people's views of politics and their partisan mobilisation to be more positive in these latter contexts than seen in my own analysis – both mobilisation and disaffection effects will differ.

Political context may also have a bearing on young people's views of politics and voting. For instance, the impact of the global financial crisis on democratic satisfaction has varied across Europe in accordance with individual countries' experiences and the actions of governments. Eurobarometer data between 2007 and 2011 shows democratic satisfaction and government trust fell by an average of 7 and 8 percentage points, across

26 EU member states (Armingeon and Guthman 2014: 431).⁶¹ In Greece, however, where the crisis has been especially pronounced, there was an absolute change of -46 and -40 (ibid: 431). The level and impact of disaffection on turnout and support for elections would be anticipated to be higher. In these cases, the rejection of voting in favour of protest or even extremist politics is possible (Sloam 2014a: 223).

With these caveats in mind, an avenue for future study is to employ multilevel modelling and cross-national data to control for known or likely areas of variation. This would include focusing on those elements of the disaffected citizenry framework I have identified as most useful for understanding low youth turnout – political responsiveness and internal efficacy and mobilisation, for example. On the one hand, we could examine the institutional-level factors influencing these attitudes and the extent to which there is general disenchantment or, alternatively, particular political settings which are making this more likely. Simultaneously, we should examine how these conditions combine with disaffection attitudes to affect both turnout and overarching approaches to participation. The research here suggests education plays a key role in determining an individual's interest in voting, via social network mobilisation. To what extent, therefore, do particular institutional arrangements aid or hinder this process? Are politicised networks always mobilising? Relatedly, is party-based mobilisation affected by the nature of party and electoral competition? Ensuring data are collected on all the issues raised in this thesis across a range of countries is therefore a necessary (albeit challenging) stage in assessing the wider applicability of my framework. As an interim test it may be possible to use national election studies from countries which differ from the British case in key ways – for example, in using proportional representation – and repeat the analysis where comparable indicators for disaffection scales are available. If the proposed causal mechanisms enjoy the same support as in the British case, the influence of this thesis can be extended.

Beyond politics, differences in education also exist. General trends indicate growth in the HE sector yet exact rates remain country-specific. Variation here may alter the impact of education on turnout and the mechanisms through which it operates. As research on the sorting model has highlighted, the effect of individual educational experience is frequently conditional on the aggregate education level of a specific location or cohort

⁶¹ Estonia excluded from sample due to missing data.

within which the individual is located (Nie et al 1996; Campbell 2009; Persson 2011, 2013; Tenn 2005). The relative prestige attached to different forms of education – vocational and academic – and the prevalence of certain educational backgrounds among elected representatives may, for instance, also affect how internal efficacy and political responsiveness are judged (see Hoskins et al 2016). Mobilisation might still be a principal mechanism yet while in the CITS sample, post-compulsory schooling was key, there could be a greater FE/HE divide in other systems. The presence and nature of citizenship education within compulsory schooling may further influence young people’s political understanding and approach (see Schulz et al 2010). Outwith education, the decline of alternative mobilising networks may also be less pronounced elsewhere. Despite young people being less likely trade union members and variation emerging across occupations (Scheuer 2011: 65-6), union density is not uniform. In Scheuer’s European study, rates in Denmark and Sweden were almost 80 per cent yet in France as low as 10 per cent (ibid: 63). Therefore, variables relating both to countries’ education systems and wider social structures, should also be included in future modelling where they are available and reliably comparable.

8.5. Puzzling participants or disaffected citizenry?

This research took Brody’s puzzle of participation (1978) as its starting point. Specifically, it asked: *Why is the comparatively higher level of education enjoyed by young people today not associated with a higher level of voter turnout?* Its major contribution has been in demystifying and reframing this puzzle as a phenomenon relating to alternative education effects, reflecting the changing levels and nature of education across the world’s established democracies. Within this, it has examined how attitudes surrounding participation choices are being influenced by education and how disaffection especially is playing a more prominent role in the turnout decisions of our younger generations. I have demonstrated how this disaffection is not a unidimensional concept and rather that behaviours are influenced by multiple attitudes combining and interacting. These can relate directly to the political world which is encountered but also how individuals view themselves within this context. I have also shown how behaviours are reflective of distinct political characters which comprise these perceptions and expectations of politics – and the amount of attention paid to these – as well as the relative preference attached to particular participation activities. These activity

preferences can develop alongside *and* in response to disaffection while when they combine within a political character, they can determine the likelihood of voting.

In order to understand electoral behaviours, we must therefore appreciate these varied combinations and recognise that, importantly, there is no single collection of views which can explain either voting or non-voting behaviour. Across both the wider and youth electorates it has been found that abstention is not universally aligned with a lack of commitment to electoral participation and/or damning views about formal politics. Other factors – namely election-specific disaffection and partisan *non*-mobilisation – appear to overrule any commitment here. Similarly, voting does not have to – but can – exist alongside a positive political outlook. A strong belief in the ideals of representative democracy appear capable of overpowering negative judgements here. As my ultimate hypothesis proposed, young people's non-participation can be jointly considered an expression of alienation and dissatisfaction with politics, views which seem to be increasingly developed and supported in response to their educational experiences – at both the individual level and in light of aggregate trends. By concentrating on the British case in my empirical analysis, I have therefore presented a picture of youth participation which identifies two key groups of non-voting young people and highlighted areas where interventions might be pursued. Mobilisation by social networks appears especially crucial. Any educational expansion will fail to boost turnout among young people if not accompanied by opportunities for political discussion upon entry into the electorate. Moreover, while education continues to emphasise individual agency, parties will need to work much harder to secure a young person's vote.

I believe this thesis makes an important contribution. It raises questions about our traditional assumptions for education effects and suggests non-participation is neither puzzling nor insurmountable. Instead, we should always consider alternative education effects and appreciate the variety of ways in which young people can be affected by their own experiences of education – including, the people this puts them into contact with, the different values and ideals it can promote, and the ways in which they come to view the political system. By doing so, we have the potential to understand their motivations better, recognise emerging approaches to participation, and so seize on these as opportunities for supporting a more electorally active youth.

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Appendix A: Survey questions and response items

The following tables present the variables in the British Election Studies (BES) (Table A1), British Participation Survey (BPS) (Table A2), and Citizens in Transition Survey (CITS) (Table A3) included in my empirical analysis of Chapters 5, 6, and 7. With reference to dataset documentation – both the survey questionnaires and codebooks, where available – exact question wording and response options are provided to aid the reader in understanding the original data collection process, the levels and types of measurement for each variable, and the exact questions respondents faced. This also enables assessment of variable comparability across datasets. I also include the original variable names to allow readers to locate corresponding data and replicate the analysis.

Notes:

1. All 'Don't know'/'Not stated'/'Not asked'/'Skipped' responses coded as missing across my analysis.
2. Age is variously measured across datasets, recorded in years-old and/or date of birth. Where available, I use years-old data. If this is unavailable, year and month of birth information is employed to approximate respondents' age (see Chapter 3).
3. Educational experience is often established in my analysis using multiple questions in the datasets, referring to qualifications and current educational/employment status. On-course students and graduates in possession of degree-level qualifications, are *both* considered to have HE experience. For the most part, these characteristics are made clear within original response options. Where distinctions are unclear – for instance, on rarer or more specialised qualifications – I refer to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's publication, 'Qualifications can cross boundaries: a guide to comparing qualifications in the UK and Ireland' (QAA 2014). This compares qualifications across UK nations and different types of educational institution. Higher education and comparable qualifications are classified as corresponding with levels 6 to 8 in the European Qualifications Framework and, most typically, Bachelor degrees or higher.
4. Ordinal scales, unless otherwise specified, have been re-coded in my analysis to range between zero and one, with reverse coding applied to negative statements (zero = negative/low; one = positive/high, etc.)

Table A1: Original question wording, variable names, and response options for variables included in disaffection analysis (British Election Study, 1987 – 2010: Disaffection over time)	
British Election Study 1987 (Heath et al 1993a)	
Agree/disagree: people like me have no say in what the government does. (v109D)	Response options: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
Agree/disagree: Parties are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions. (v109h)	
British Election Study 1992 (Heath et al 1993b)	
Agree/disagree: people like me have no say in what the government does. (v220b)	Response options: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
British Election Study 1997 (Heath et al 1999)	
On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Britain? (democsat)	Response options: Very satisfied; Fairly Satisfied; A little dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied
Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each one of the following statements. - People like me have no say in what the government does. (govnosay) - Parties are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions (votintr)	Response options: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
British Election Study 2001 (Clarke et al 2003)	
On the whole, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that democracy works in this country? (bq70)	Response options: Very satisfied; Fairly Satisfied; A little dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied
On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means no influence and 10 means a great deal of influence, how much influence do you have on politics and public affairs? (bq58)	Response options: No influence; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; A great deal of influence
Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each one of the following statements. - People like me have no say in what government does. (bq65a) - Parties are only interested in people's votes, not in their opinions. (bq65d)	Response options: Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree
British Election Study 2005 (Clarke et al 2006)	
On the whole, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that democracy works in this country? (bq65)	Response options: Very satisfied; Fairly Satisfied; A little dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied
On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means no influence and 10 means a great deal of influence, how much influence do you have on politics and public affairs? (bq61)	Response options: No influence; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; A great deal of influence
British Election Study 2010 (Whiteley and Sanders 2014)	
On a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 means a great deal of influence and 0 means no influence, how much influence do you have on politics and public affairs? (bq59)	Response options: No influence; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; A great deal of influence
On the whole, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that democracy works in this country? (bq61)	Response options: Very satisfied; Fairly Satisfied; A little dissatisfied; Very dissatisfied

Table A2: Original question wording, variable names, and response options for variables included in disaffection analysis (British Participation Survey 2011 (Webb 2012))	
Question (original variable name in parentheses)	Response options
Age (Age)	(Scale-level variable, in years)
Gender (Gender1)	Male; Female
Would you call yourself very strong party supporter, fairly strong, or not very strong? (pa3q1)	Very strongly; Fairly strongly; Not very strongly
To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (Ethnicity)	White British; White Irish; Any other white background; White and Black Caribbean; White and Black Asian; Any other mixed background; Indian; Pakistani; Bangladeshi; Any other Asian background; Black Caribbean; Black African; Any other black background; Chinese; Other ethnic group; Refused; Skipped; Not asked
Terminal age of education (Education_age)	15 or under; 16; 17-18; 19; 20+; Still at school/Full time student; Can't remember; Skipped; Not asked
What is the highest educational or work-related qualification you have? (Education_level)	No formal qualifications; Youth training certificate/skillseekers; Recognized trade apprenticeship completed; Clerical and commercial; City and Guild certificate; City and Guild certificate – advanced; ONC; CSE grades 2-5; CSE grade 1, GCE O level, GCSE, School Certificate; Scottish Ordinary/Lower Certificate; GCE A level or Higher Certificate; Scottish Higher Certificate; Nursing qualification (e.g. SEN, SRN, SCM, RGN); Teaching qualification (not degree); University diploma; University or CNAAB first degree (e.g. BA, BSc, Bed); University or CNAAB higher degree (e.g. MSc, PhD); Other technical, professional or higher qualification; Don't know; Prefer not to say; Skipped; Not asked
Did you vote in the General Election held on Thursday, May 6 th 2010? (vi3)	Yes, I did vote in the General Election; No, I did not vote in the General Election
On the whole, how satisfied, if at all, are you with the way that democracy works in this country? (peq3)	Very satisfied; Fairly satisfied; Not very satisfied; Not at all satisfied
On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 means a great deal of influence and 0 means no influence, how much influence, if any, would you say you have on politics and public affairs? (peq4)	0 no influence; 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10 great deal of influence
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?	Strongly agree; Tend to agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Tend to disagree; Strongly disagree

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Government generally treats people like me fairly (plq1) - There is often a big gap between what people like me expect out of life and what we actually get (plq2) - Being active in politics is a good way to get benefits for me and my family (plq3) - I trust the government to act in the best interests of the country (sus2c) - In general, I tend to trust politicians (sus2d) - When people like me get involved in politics, they can really change the way that the country is run (sus2f) - I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics (sus2g) - I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country (sus2h) - I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people (sus2i) - I think that I am as well-informed about politics and government as most people (sus2j) - Political parties are important to represent voters' interests (sus2m) - Openness to other people's views, and a willingness to compromise are important for politics in a country as diverse as ours (sus9a) - It is important for elected officials to discuss and debate things thoroughly before making major policy changes (sus9b) - In a democracy like ours, there are some important differences between how government should be run and how a business should be managed (sus9c) - It is important for the people and their elected representatives to have the final say in running government, rather than leaving it up to unelected experts (sus9d) - Politicians would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems (sus10a) - What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out one's principles (sus10b) - Most of my family and friends think that voting is a waste of time. (plq6) 	
<p>To what extent, if at all, do you believe you can influence decisions affecting...?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your local area (sus4a) - The country as a whole (sus4b) 	<p>A great deal; Fair amount; Not very much; None at all</p>
<p>Would you be willing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote in a local, national, or European election (sus17_1) - Take part in industrial action (sus17_2) - Become a member of a political party (sus17_3) - Hold office in a local or national pressure group or organization (sus17_4) - Hold local or national party office (sus17_5) - Contact a local councillor, members of a devolved assembly, MP or MEP about an issue of concern to you (sus17_6) 	<p>Yes; No</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sign a public petition regarding a national or local political issue (sus17_7) - Take part in a public demonstration about an issue of concern to you (sus17_8) - Donate money to a party or other political organization (sus17_9) - Write a letter to a newspaper editor (sus17_10) - Take an active part in a political campaign about an issue of concern to you (sus17_11) - Campaign on behalf of a candidate for local, national, devolved or European election (sus17_12) - Be a candidate for an elective post at local, devolved, UK or European levels (sus17_13) - Go to a political meeting (sus17_15) - Boycott or buy certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons (sus17_16) - Make a speech before an organised group (sus17_19) <p>Have you ever:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote in a local, national, or European election (sus18_1) - Take part in industrial action (sus18_2) - Become a member of a political party (sus18_3) - Hold office in a local or national pressure group or organization (sus18_4) - Hold local or national party office (sus18_5) - Contact a local councillor, members of a devolved assembly, MP or MEP about an issue of concern to you (sus18_6) - Sign a public petition regarding a national or local political issue (sus18_7) - Take part in a public demonstration about an issue of concern to you (sus18_8) - Donate money to a party or other political organization (sus18_9) - Write a letter to a newspaper editor (sus18_10) - Take an active part in a political campaign about an issue of concern to you (sus18_11) - Campaign on behalf of a candidate for local, national, devolved or European election (sus18_12) - Be a candidate for an elective post at local, devolved, UK or European levels (sus18_13) - Go to a political meeting (sus18_15) - Boycott or buy certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons (sus18_16) - Make a speech before an organised group (sus18_19) 	
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Table A3: Original question wording, variable names, and response options for variables included in disaffection analysis (Citizens in Transition Study 2011 (Whiteley et al 2013))	
Question (original variable name in parentheses)	Response options
<p>We want to find out about what you are up to now. Are you...?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doing a degree at university (L5A20b1#05a) - On a course at college/sixth form college (L5A20b1#05b) - On a course at a training provider (L5A20b1#05c) - In an Apprenticeship/Advanced Apprenticeship (L5A20b1#05d) - In another job with training (L5A20b1#05e) - In a job without training (L5A20b1#05f) - Looking after home/family (L5A20b1#05g) - Taking a break from work/study (L5A20b1#05h) - Looking for a school/college course (L5A20b1#05i) - Looking for a training course (L5A20b1#05j) - Looking for a job (L5A20b1#05k) - Something else (L5A20b1#05l) 	Yes; No
Did you vote in last year's general election, on May 6 th 2010? (L5Q8a#15)	Yes; No
There are lots of political parties in this country. Do you support any particular party? (L5Q31a#26)	Yes; No
The next question is about politics in general. How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in politics? (L5N#30)	A great deal; Quite a lot; Some; Not very much; None at all
Are you male or female? (L5Q18#47)	Male; Female
How would you describe yourself? (L5Q19#54)	Asian or British Asian (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi); Black or Black British (e.g. Caribbean, African); Chinese; Mixed ethnic origin; White British; White European; Other ethnic group
<p>What does your mother (or female carer) do for a living? Which of the following best describes the sort of work she does? (L5Q25a#63)</p> <p>What does your father (or male carer) do for a living? Which of the following best describes the sort of work she does? (L5Q25a#64)</p>	Professional of higher technical work; Manager or Senior Administrator; Clerical; Sales or Services; Small business owner; Foreman or supervisor of other workers; Skilled Manual Work; Semi-Skilled Manual Work; Homemaker/carer in home; Never worked; Other
<p>How much do you trust the following?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Politicians (L5Q26f#66f) - The government (L5N#66h) 	Not at all; A little; Quite a lot; Completely
<p>How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My friends are not interested in politics (L5Q33a#72a) - I often discuss politics with other people (L5Q33c#72c) - Politics makes no difference to people my age (L5Q33d#72d) - I know less about politics than most people my age (L5Q33g#72g) - Sometimes politics is so complicated I cannot understand what is going on (L5A22h#72h) 	Strongly disagree; Disagree; Neither agree nor disagree; Agree; Strongly agree

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People like me can have a real influence on government if they get involved (L5Q37a1#76a) - My views are not taken seriously in my neighbourhood (L5Q37a2#76b) - When local people campaign together they can help to solve problems in the community (L5Q37a4#76d) 	
<p>In the future will you –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote in general elections (L5Q38a#79a) - Vote in local elections (L5Q38b#79d) - Vote in elections to the European Parliament (L5N#79e) - Join a political party (L5Q38c#79f) - Get involved in local politics (L5Q38e#79h) <p>If you were confronted by something you thought was wrong would you –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact a newspaper (L5Q39a#80a) - Contact your Member of Parliament (MP) (L5Q39b#80b) - Take part in a radio phone-in programme (L5Q39c#80c) - Take part in a non-violent protest march or rally (L5Q39d#80d) - Block traffic as a form of protest (L5Q39e#80e) - Take part in a violent demonstration (L5Q39f#80f) - Start a Facebook group about a political or social issue (L5N#80g) - Start a Twitter campaign about a political or social issue (L5N#80h) 	<p>Definitely not do this; Probably not do this; Probably do this; Definitely do this</p>
<p>Year of birth (I5DOB#52) Month of birth (I5DOB#53)</p>	<p>(Scale level variable – numerical values for year and month)</p>
<p>After doing all that you have to do (e.g. housework, eating, sleeping, time spent at work, training or studying), how much free time do you think you have? (L5Q10#04)</p>	<p>None; A little; A fair amount; A lot</p>
<p>Which of these qualifications do you have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-4 GCSEs (any grades), Entry Level, Foundation Diploma (L5N#58a) - NVQ Level 1, Foundation GNVQ, Basic Skills (L5N#58b) - 5+ GCSEs (grades A*-C), School Certificate, 1 A level/2-3 AS levels, Higher Diploma (L5N#58c) - NVQ Level 2, Intermediate GNVQ, City and Guilds Craft, BTEC First/General Diploma, RSA Diploma (L5N#58d) - Apprenticeship (L5N#58e) - 2+ A levels, 4+ AS levels, Higher School Certificate, Progression/Advanced Diploma (L5N#58f) - NVQ Level 3, Advanced GNVQ, City and Guilds Advanced Craft, ONC, OND, BTEC National, RSA Advanced Diploma (L5N#58g) - Degree (for example BA, BSc), Higher degree (for example MA, PhD, PGCE) (L5N#58h) - NVQ Level 4-5, HNC, HND, RSA Higher Diploma, BTEC Higher Level (L5N#58i) - Professional qualifications (for example teaching, nursing, accountancy) (L5N#58j) - Other vocational/work-related qualifications (L5N#58k) - Foreign qualifications (L5N#58l) - No qualifications (L5N#58m) 	<p>Yes; No</p>

Appendix B: Sample characteristics

In the following tables, demographic data for age, sex, and ethnicity are presented alongside corresponding figures from the 2011 Census for England and Wales and 2011 Census for Scotland. Table B1 demonstrates that while obtained using a quota sample, there are commonalities between the British Participation Survey (BPS) sample and voting age population. Importantly, the key group of interest (18-24 year olds) do not appear to be especially under-represented. Further design weights to account for sample variation do not, therefore, appear as critical.

Table B1: British Participation Survey 2011 sample demographics and 2011 Census data				
	2011 Census*			
	England and Wales	Scotland	Britain (%)	BPS (%)
Age				
18-24	5267401	506222	11.9	10.1
25-44	15351774	1402081	34.6	29.5
45-64	14263297	1454169	32.5	42.1
65-74	4852833	481792	11.0	14.7
75+	4370240	408542	9.9	3.5
(Total)	(44105545)	(4252806)	(99.9)	(99.9)
Sex				
Male	21441794	2033739	48.5	46.0
Female	22663751	2219067	51.5	54.0
(Total)	(44105545)	(4252806)	(100)	(100)
Ethnicity				
White British	36111908	4028639**	82.8	88.1
(Total)	(44105545)	(4379072)**		

*18+ years population; **16+ years population (data table availability); Sources: British Participation Survey 2011; Census 2011 (2013a, 2013b, 2013c); Scotland's Census (2015a, 2015b)

Table B2, which compares the Citizens in Transition Survey sample with information on young people in the 2011 Census finds more variation although on the issue of age the sample appears fairly evenly distributed. Females are much more heavily represented in the sample, as are young people identifying as White British. However, further analysis ahead of data weighting decisions suggests that for studies of turnout this population-sample divergence is less critical. The recommended design weight (*CAWI_Weight*) – calculated to account for gender, region, ethnicity and highest qualification (Sturman et al 2012: 18) reports turnout figures which are almost identical to the unweighted data

(Table B3). Importantly, this appears to reflect over-reporting for electoral participation, helping to justify further my decision only to apply a youth turnout correction weight in the CITS.

Table B2: Citizens in Transition Survey 2011 sample demographics and 2011 Census data					
	2011 Census*				
	England and Wales	Scotland	Britain (%)	CITS (%)	
Age				Birth year	%
18	715660	68130	13.6	1992	9.5
19	744496	74152	14.2	1991	11.4
20	773709	74835	14.7	1990	12.7
21	754938	72001	14.3	1989	11.2
22	757675	72969	14.4	1988	12.2
23	769029	73783	14.6	1987	13.9
24	751894	70352	14.2	1986	15.3
				1985	13.9
(Total)	(5267401)	(506222)	100		100
Sex					
Male	2658445	252284	50.4		29.5
Female	2608956	253938	49.6		70.5
(Total)	(5267401)	(506222)	100		100
Ethnicity					
White British	2958736	556818**	59.6		80.3
(Total)	(5267401)	(632488)**			

*18-24 population; **16-24 population; Sources: CITS 2011 (CAWI) – excluding Northern Irish respondents, only individuals born 1992 or earlier; Census 2011 (2013a, 2013b, 2013c); Scotland's Census (2015a, 2015b)

Table B3: Turnout at the 2010 general election			
	Unweighted (%)	Design weight (%)	Ipsos-MORI youth turnout weight (%)
Average	60.7	59.2	44.0
No HE or FE	53.9	51.8	37.4
FE	44.4	42.0	28.9
HE (UG)	63.4	65.7	46.8
HE (PG)	72.3	78.6	56.8
Graduate	75.5	78.4	60.9

Source: CITS 2011 (CAWI) – excluding Northern Irish respondents, only individuals born 1992 or earlier.

Appendix C: Disaffection scale creation

The component variables for operationalising absolute disaffection – relating to external efficacy and political responsiveness – are presented in Table C1. The development of two separate scales is supported by strong Cronbach Alphas, suggestive of high levels of consistency and reliability in survey respondents' answers.⁶² Further analysis suggests coherence in views across the seven age groups (18-24, 25--34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74, 75+). On political responsiveness, alphas range from .709 to .783. On external efficacy, there is greater variation, 18-24 year olds and those 75+ demonstrating alphas of just .628 and .622, respectively – compared to a range of .700 to .798 for all other age groups. Nonetheless, whole-sample scores remain acceptable for scale creation. The method of scale creation adopted here and for Table C2 involves summing the component variables (recoded between zero and one) and dividing by the number of variables, for a final scale between 0 (=negative) and 1 (=positive).

Table C1: Perceptions of politics in the British Participation Study (scales and component variables)		
Scale	Variables (variable names for this thesis in parentheses)	Cronbach Alpha
External efficacy (exteffscale)	Being active in politics is a good way to get benefits for me and my family. (benefit)	.749
	When people like me get involved in politics they really can change the way that the country is run. (involve)	
	Can influence decisions affecting local area. (influenceL)	
	Can influence decisions affecting country as a whole. (influenceC)	
	How much influence do you have on politics? (polinf)	
Political responsiveness (respscale)	How much trust in a British government of any party to place the needs of the country above the interests of their own party or parties? (Tanygovt)	.748
	I trust government to act in the best interests of the country. (trustgovt)	
	In general I tend to trust politicians. (trustpol)	
	The government generally treats people like me fairly. (govtfair)	
	There is often a big gap between what people like me expect out of life and what we actually get. (gapR)	
	Politicians would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems. (stoptalk)	
	What people call 'compromise' in politics is really just selling out one's principles. (compromise)	

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official turnout at 2010 general election; n = 1101 (exteffscale), 1183 (respscale)

⁶² Acceptable/adequate levels considered > .65 (Vaske 2008) or > .7 (Tavakol and Dennick 2011).

Variables capturing citizens' expectations – against which absolute disaffection is judged – are given in Table C2. Internal efficacy demonstrates consistently strong alphas across age groups, ranging from .766 to .871. This is less apparent political ideals. 18-24 year olds demonstrate the greatest consistency in responses ($\alpha = .778$) while most groups generate almost satisfactory reliability scores, alphas of at least .6. Older individuals do not demonstrate coherency in responses: 65-74 year olds ($\alpha = .526$), 75+ years ($\alpha = .178$). This supports earlier suggestions that with democracy operating in different forms, indicators of what constitutes strong and successful democratic practice can inevitably vary. Older individuals may, as in Norris's study, believe it is important to be governed under a democracy (2011: 31, 119-141) but when pressed might express differences in the specific aspects of democracy they prioritise. Sample size issues resulting from the disaggregation may also affect scale reliability for these groups, however, and for the sample as a whole there remains support for grouping the variables in the intended way.

Table C2: Democratic preferences and scales (and component variables)		
Scale	Variables (variable names for this thesis in parentheses)	Cronbach Alpha
Internal efficacy (inteffscale)	I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.	.738
	I feel I have a pretty good understanding of the important issues facing our country.	
	I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.	
	I think I am as well-informed about politics and government as most other people.	
Political ideals (idealscale)	Political parties are important to represent voters' interests.	.651
	Openness to other people's views, and a willingness to compromise, are important for politics in a country as diverse as ours.	
	It is important for elected officials to discuss and debate things thoroughly before making major policy changes.	
	In a democracy like ours there are some important differences between how a government should be run and a company managed.	
	It is important for the people and their elected representatives to have the final say in running government rather than leaving it up to unelected experts.	

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout; n = 1205 (inteffscale), 1244 (idealscale)

Appendix D: Latent class analysis (additional statistics)

For the latent class analysis (LCA) using the British Participation Survey (BPS), I tested up to a 9-class model. Model fit statistics are presented in Table D1. Ideally, the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) figure should be as low as possible, directing me initially towards eight classes. However, further investigations suggest that for meaningful analysis, given the overall sample size, this may not be optimal. Two of the eight clusters relate to fewer than five per cent of the sample. No hard and fast rule requires such models to be discarded. However, if categories are to be usefully employed to assess relationships following sample disaggregation, ensuring appropriate class sizes is important. Moreover, while the reduction in L^2 from the model of complete independence (1-class) continues, the rate of change slows before reaching the 8-class model (see Magidson and Vermunt 2004: 176-7). Classification errors also start to increase, albeit marginally. Thus, I concentrate on the highlighted 5-class model – although to ensure any important variation is not neglected, I have also studied results relating to the 6-, 7-, and 8-class models. Tellingly, there do not appear to be additional, especially distinct classes which emerge, suggesting there is little theoretical gain to be had from extending the number of classes (see Oser et al 2013: 95). Within the 5-class model, each participation item adds significantly to variation observed between classes (Wald statistic, $p < .05$). The profiles for each class are then presented in Table D2.

Table D1: Model fit statistics for political repertoire class models

Class model	LL	BIC_{LL}	L^2	% change L^2	Classification error
1-class	-19537.50	39305.08	22890.37		0
2-class	-16248.83	32965.00	16313.02	28.73	0.03
3-class	-15266.87	31238.35	14349.10	37.31	0.04
4-class	-14919.08	30780.05	13653.53	40.35	0.07
5-class	-14649.50	30478.16	13114.37	42.71	0.08
6-class	-14503.43	30423.28	12822.22	43.98	0.09
7-class	-14360.89	30375.48	12537.16	45.23	0.10
8-class	-14241.00	30372.96	12297.36	46.28	0.10
9-class	-14147.53	30423.30	12110.43	47.09	0.10

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout; $n = 1030.36$; LL = log-likelihood, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion, L^2 = likelihood ratio chi-square statistic.

Table D2: Profile table for 5-class participation repertoire model - activity experience and activity willingness

	Hands-off frustrated elector (Class 1)	Selective mobilised voter (Class 2)	Disengaged marginalised citizen (Class 3)	Omnivorous mobilised voter (class 4)	Dormant engaged activist (Class 5)
Cluster Size	0.33	0.28	0.24	0.08	0.08
Wvote	0.81	0.94	0.12	0.99	0.91
Hvote	0.72	0.92	0.17	1.00	0.75
Windustrial	0.19	0.33	0.02	0.56	0.33
Hindustrial	0.16	0.36	0.02	0.51	0.16
Wmemberpp	0.04	0.15	0.01	0.73	0.63
Hmemberpp	0.04	0.18	0.00	0.73	0.14
Wpressure	0.01	0.13	0.02	0.58	0.60
Hpressure	0.00	0.05	0.01	0.34	0.08
Woffice	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.45	0.59
Hoffice	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.29	0.04
Wcontact	0.43	0.90	0.02	0.94	0.86
Hcontact	0.19	0.74	0.04	0.90	0.35
Wpetition	0.75	0.93	0.07	0.99	0.82
Hpetition	0.47	0.92	0.07	0.99	0.51
Wdemo	0.19	0.48	0.01	0.84	0.45
Hdemo	0.03	0.34	0.02	0.71	0.18
Wdonate	0.03	0.09	0.00	0.66	0.26
Hdonate	0.02	0.12	0.00	0.65	0.07
Wnewspaper	0.23	0.60	0.04	0.89	0.64
Hnewspaper	0.10	0.38	0.03	0.76	0.36
Wcampaign	0.03	0.26	0.01	0.81	0.64
Hcampaign	0.01	0.12	0.01	0.72	0.12
Wcanvass	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.65	0.42
Hcanvass	0.01	0.07	0.00	0.58	0.06
Wstand	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.45	0.57
Hstand	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.27	0.02
Wmeeting	0.07	0.35	0.01	0.81	0.74
Hmeeting	0.05	0.30	0.00	0.85	0.16
Wboycott	0.39	0.70	0.01	0.82	0.59
Hboycott	0.18	0.53	0.01	0.75	0.28
Wspeech	0.03	0.19	0.01	0.65	0.56
Hspeech	0.03	0.17	0.02	0.61	0.26

Source: British Participation Survey 2011, weighted by official 2010 General Election turnout, n = 1326; conducted using Latent Gold 5.0. Activities prefixed with 'W' indicate willingness to participate and with 'H', experience of having done so (full descriptions available in Table 6.1).